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CHAPLAIN OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS
SELECT PREACHER BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD



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BATTLE HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord :
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored ;
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword :
 His truth is marching on.

I have seen Him in the watch-fires of a hundred circling camps ;
They have builded Him an altar in the evening dews and damps ;
I can read His righteous sentence by the dim and flaring lamps :
 His day is marching on.

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat ;
He is sifting out the hearts of men before His Judgment Seat ;
O, be swift, my soul, to answer Him, be jubilant, my feet !
 Our God is marching on.

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born, across the sea,
With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me :
As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free,
 While God is marching on.

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THE POWER OF FAITH

THE POWER OF FAITH

"Who through faith subdued kingdoms, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens."—HEB. xi. 33, 34.

THROUGH Faith. Whose Faith? Not only the faith of the fighters, but the faith of those who stayed at home who knew how to pray. Real Faith, calm, unshakable realization of God as the "All" does not imply passive inaction, waiting for an extra-cosmic world ruler to do for you what He, as Immanent Spirit, purposes to do through you. There must be heroism, self-sacrifice, possibly a bloody chapter in the martyrdom of man. Real Faith lifts the whole deadly struggle to the very highest plane and sets free influences of power. That the whole dynamic value of this Faith may be in operation it should be national. If it prevailed in every heart, in every community calling itself a Church in

Great Britain, in this time of crisis, the magnificent heroism of those who, at the front, are "valiant in fight" would more rapidly "turn to flight the armies of the aliens." To be national this faith must be individual.

What is this Faith? It is the acquired habit of intensely realizing God as the "All," and holding the whole national crisis into that realization. It is entering mentally into "the secret place of the Most High." Alone in the silence, you free your mind, for the time, from emotional excitement and sense impressions, and realize God as the "All." You recognize that the Infinite Creative Life-Principle must be one, and must be everywhere, and that "there can be none else." As you think into this silently, earnestly, the apparent antagonism between one form of the self-expression of the All-Spirit and another ceases to perplex you; you see that there must be a profound unity of essence, and of purpose, in all that is, and there is no room left in your mind for another self-existent negative power. God being Infinite, you know that there cannot be a minute particle in the whole universe in which He is not, as originating and sustaining substance; therefore God, as a single unit,

is everywhere, and everywhere the same. In that realization, and in that mental attitude, you can vigorously do your duty in the conditions prevailing in the circumference of life without doubt or over-anxiety.

You will, of course, find yourself confronted by the old problem of the *unde malum*, whence then came evil, but it will not distress you when you look at it from "the secret place of the Most High." As God is all and "there is none else," it is obvious that the Infinite Spirit of Divine Love is originally responsible for the conditions under which the dark side of human life became possible in the world. He says so Himself. He says, "I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create evil, I the Lord do all these things." You are then independent of the speculations of the thinkers of the great world-religions. You are interested, of course, in noting how the Jewish theology evolved their Satan from the Ahriman of Zoroaster; how the great Brahminical faiths eluded the difficulty by their doctrine of Maya or illusion; how Guatama Buddha taught that evil was only a condition of manifestation, however perfect that manifestation might be; but you recog-

nize that none of these solutions can be compared with the plain, straightforward statement of Isaiah. God says, through the mouth of the prophet, there is but one Absolute Substance, one life, one purpose, pulsing through all things. Whatever exists in this visible universe, however apparently contradictory, must be, in some way, an expression of the Cause of Causes, and His name is Love. The tumult in the circumference of life is not the dominance of some evil chance against individuals, or nations, but part of the unfolding of a perfect purpose. If creation has involved the endurance of what, to our sense-consciousness, is obviously evil, such as infernal inventions to poison men, and cold-blooded murder on the high seas, inasmuch as creation is the manifesting in concrete phenomena, and the individualizing into separate life-centres, of the substance and purpose of the Infinite Originating Spirit, evil must be part of a process, omnipotent interference with which would frustrate human education, and in which ultimate failure is impossible and where the most glaring contradictions must be working together for good.

When I know this, not as a mere philo-

sophical speculation, but by the apprehension of my intuitive faculty ; when, in my thoughts, I have disentangled my God-conception from limitations, and recognized that all phenomena are the self-expression of the conscious, sensitive Soul of the universe, I possess a confidence that gives me peace behind all the bitter experiences of temporary conditions. I can love God and trust God, and not hesitate, even in the midst of such infinite confusion as that which at present perplexes the world, to lift up my heart, in the midst of tears and sorrow, and say, "Our Father, Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen."

Certain general inferences follow. First, recognition that the Infinite Mind is the only driving power behind evolution, and that where the higher plane of evolution is not recognized, the law must work upon the lower plane of struggle, bloodshed, conquest. It is on this plane that the law is working in this present unprecedented war-struggle. This war is a reversion to the law of the survival of the fittest, not in this case of the fittest physically, but of the fittest morally. This is a war of Principles, the Principle of freedom,

civilization and brotherliness fighting against the Principle of materialism, animalism and tyranny. The Germans say, "Gott mit uns." So He is with them. The endless changelessness of His perfect purpose is working out for them, in the sphere of conditions, the obliteration, as we hope and believe, of a national attitude of arrogant materialism destructive of the real spiritual growth of a nation capable of the highest development. Then, secondly, the mind can rest in the recognition that the All-Spirit works through immutable laws and forces, which seem antagonistic but which in essence are harmony, and that the unrest and suffering and disorder caused by the misuse of the human will are the inevitable conditions of a system of education by contrasts, through which alone human souls can emerge as true moral beings. Even our limited human judgments can perceive the working out of this educative purpose, and that, without the physical and moral evils in the circumference of life, the noblest human characteristics never would have been evolved. Therefore, as Shakespeare says,

" There is some soul of goodness in things evil
Would men observingly distil it out."

What "soul of goodness" can we "observingly distil out" of the "things evil" of this war, the vastest war-struggle ever known in the world's history? We are at death-grips with a very powerful, wholly unscrupulous military nation which is aiming at the domination of Europe and eventually of the world. "Deutschland über alles" is their war-cry, and "Deutschland über alles" would mean the enslavement of Europe.

In the prosecution of this infamous motto the Germans, under orders from headquarters, have been guilty of organized barbarism for which history provides no parallel. Official commissions have inquired, with the utmost care, into the character of the German crimes, and it would appear that the half has not been told us, and now the Germans have sunk to a level of degradation which has caused them to stink in the nostrils of the civilized world. The Prime Minister truly said, "The German record is a horrible record of calculated cruelty and crime." Against this "calculated cruelty and crime," these base and dastardly actions of poisoning wells, asphyxiating enemies, and murdering harmless non-combatants at sea, the Allies are pledged to fight to a finish.

Let all sickly sentimentalism be put aside. Let it be recognized that we are fighting God's battle against the greatest criminals that have ever befouled the world. The Bishop of London knocked pacifist sentimentalism on the head when he said that when the words were quoted to him, "Vengeance is mine, and I will repay, saith the Lord," his reply was: "Yes, and the Lord always uses human hands to execute this vengeance." The cold-blooded criminals of the German Imperial Staff are guilty before the civilized world of murder, and the Allies must bring upon them a murderer's doom or perish in the attempt. Then, and not till then, will Britain sheathe her sword. Where, then, can we find any "soul of goodness" in so vast and sanguinary an undertaking? The "soul of goodness," so far as we British are concerned, may certainly be found, in the first place, in the immediate patriotic rally of our colonies, and the unparalleled heroism of our soldiers. Then, secondly, there is a "soul of goodness" in the splendid Patriotism of the millions who have flocked to the colours during the last two years, and the glorious conduct of the flower of Britain's manhood

on land, on the sea, and in the air. The unprecedented crisis through which the nation is passing has awakened and developed the ancient and inbred qualities of the British race. A youth of twenty-six in the Durham Light Infantry, after thirteen days in the trenches without washing his hands or removing his sodden boots, writes to his people at home, "Mind if I am killed I shall be the first of my name to die for my country, and I shall be proud to do it." The same spirit pervades our brave Allies. A prominent French politician received a letter from the trenches from his boy of nineteen in which he wrote, "I shall probably never see you again, but I rejoice that I was born that I may die for France, and that is the feeling in every trench."

This wonderful spirit of self-sacrifice is indeed a "soul of goodness" distilled out of the evil of this war, for, remember, the awakening of the spirit of self-sacrifice is the awakening of the universal mystic Christ, and that is the "soul of goodness" in all. Those were noble lines written from the trenches by the Chaplain of the third brigade of the Canadian Division:—

"At last, O Christ, in this strange darkened land,
Where ruined homes lie round on every hand,
Life's deeper truths men come to understand.

For lonely graves along the countryside,
Where sleep those brave hearts who for others died,
Tell of life's union with the Crucified.

And new light kindles in the mourners' eyes,
Like day-dawn breaking through the rifted skies,
For Life is born of life's self-sacrifice."

That life is thus being "born of life's self-sacrifice" is manifest at the front, there "life's deeper truths" our men are coming "to understand." I was told recently of a certain censor, whose duty it was to read a vast number of soldiers' letters before passing them for the post, and who had been himself practically a non-believer. The calm trust in God, and the willingness to give their lives for right and truth, with which these letters were full, so deeply touched him that his entire mental attitude towards religion changed.

There is a suggestion also of a "soul of goodness" in those remarkable words spoken by the Chancellor of the Exchequer last year. He said, "We are being scourged to an elevation where we can see the everlasting things

that matter for nations, the great peaks of honour which perhaps we had forgotten, Duty, Patriotism, and the Pinnacle of sacrifice pointing like a mystic finger to heaven."

"Scourged to an elevation." It is almost an echo of the German parrot-cry "Gott strafe England." It is a statesman's paraphrase of the profound truth, that God's sons are "made perfect through suffering." That is "life's union with the Crucified."

Now the question before the nation at the present moment is, how far are we, at home, being "scourged to an elevation" from which we are beginning to realize that spirit of self-sacrifice which is "life's union with the Crucified." Our glorious brothers at the front are ungrudgingly giving their lives under the hail of the German shells, and the damnable poison gas. Are we, at home, supporting them, not only by the intensity and reality of our faith, but also by unselfish national co-operation? Are we, as a nation, properly organized for this war, upon the issue of which our very existence depends? All who know that the nerve of our national strength is the unselfish patriotism of the masses must have trembled when they read that some of the

men, not the majority of them, upon whose labour in the construction of guns and shells the lives of their brethren in the trenches depend, refused to abandon one of their holidays. The message that came from General French's A.D.C. to the workers of England is significant. He said: "As an industrial population in peace time you have excelled the world. Surely you will not fail these gallant men who are cheerfully and uncomplainingly defending your homes and women-folk at the expense of their own lives. In the production of war material every minute means another shell, and perhaps the saving of another of those gallant lives. How can you stop for an instant to think of racing, football, cricket, holidays or strikes while victory hangs in the balance and your mates are blown to bits ? "

I submit that there is only one alternative which can really save the situation, an alternative which would not have been possible under party government, but which is well within the power of a coalition. It is to place the whole nation under precisely the same discipline as that which obtains with the army at the front. We know what would

be the fate of a soldier at the front who dared to dispute or disobey an order from his Commanding Officer. The Sheriff of Glasgow expressed it almost too plainly in an action by an employer against workmen before his Court. He said, "There is only one way of dealing with ' slackers ' on government work, they should be shot." At Newcastle and Gateshead men wearing war service badges were fined for drunkenness. The chairman of the Bench said, " You are a disgrace to the service; there is too much of this going on. You should have more sense of decency."

If Britain is to fulfil her duty to God and man, if she is to save her land from horrors unspeakable, if she is to conquer these determined and highly organized barbarians, who have sunk to the level of wild animals, she will have to do much more than appeal to "a sense of decency." The whole nation must be put under martial law from top to bottom. No sensible person counsels a blindfold rush at forcing every male into the ranks. This is by no means merely a military problem, the multitudes who have come, and are still coming, to the colours, place the military aspect

of the question almost in the second place ; our young men are coming in faster than equipment can be provided for them. National service means service on behalf of the nation in every department. There are industries essential to national finance ; they need men. Miners, dockyard hands, factory workers, tram conductors, railway servants, cotton workers, all are necessary to the community ; but the urgent need in this time of national crisis is that all these industries shall be organized by the State and placed under martial discipline, and that a strike at home should receive precisely the same treatment as a mutiny at the front. There would, of course, be inconvenience, but there would be no tyranny, only a temporary suspension of the liberty of the individual for the sake of the nation. There would be the utmost consideration for the capacity and aptitude of each individual citizen ; but the severest punishment for every slacker in government work ; instant extinction of every newspaper playing into the hands of the Germans by abusing our generals ; remorseless sweeping into training of every shirker physically capable of bearing arms, and the undisputed

control of the sale of intoxicants by the military authority of each district.

I pray that the non-party Coalition Government may be inspired by one thought only—national duty in the face of national danger.

General Grant said, "The conscience of the world must ultimately become the governor of the politics of the world." The saying is even more true of the conscience of a nation. May the conscience of Britain insist upon the adoption of this expedient of compulsory national service during the continuance of the war.

When we have taken our part in urging the nation to do its duty, we may with a clear conscience retire into the secret place of the Most High, and realize God. From that "secret place" we can contribute our share in exercising that faith which "subdues kingdoms and puts to flight the armies of the aliens."

We can live in the realization that real life is God within man. We can rest calmly in the knowledge that the greatest of all healing and reforming forces in the world is God realized in the human consciousness as the harmony at the heart of all discord and the

promise of joy working through all sorrow to end it.

The world is wet with tears to-day ; there is hardly a home in the whole land that has not given at least one loved one to the peril of physical death in this war of Christianity against materialism.

Have you a loved one at the front ? Think of him as one " waxed valiant in fight " for God Almighty, as one whose real life is " hid with Christ in God." Pray, " Divine Love fulfil Thy highest thought in him. He has offered to Thee his human life in this world-wide battle against materialism and selfishness." Then, mentally, retreat from the circumference, get into the centre, remember there is no death. If the body of the one whom you love, and long to see again, is slain, think of the unending life and the noble cause for which that body has been sacrificed, and the absolute certainty that you will meet him again. " Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends." Therefore :—

" Courage, faint heart ! The world's fierce travail-throes

Bring to the birth a new world wherein man

Shall nearer draw to God ; a fairer world,
Bought by the tears and blood of martyred millions.

Death is not death to Love, nor wounds nor tears
Aught to delay His purpose. For each cry
Bleeds His paternal heart ; our pain is His.
In His clear sight all shrinks to nothingness
Before the eternal welfare of His child—
Love's consummation, high, ineffable.

O Mystery of Love ! Love's consummation
Must be some vast, some all-inclusive good,
Reaching beyond this world deluged in blood,
Sacrifice such as this to justify.
Yet He who placed His children here knew well
The cost ; and, knowing, He created man.
Fear not ! Almighty Love is at the helm ! ”

HUMAN DEVILS

" Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist stedfast in the faith."—I PET. v. 8.

THE occurrence of these words in the Epistle for this morning, and the coincidence of their repetition in the second lesson for this evening, make it difficult to pass them by, and enable me to answer the many questions coming to me. I never desire to dogmatize. I only try to transmit to others what is true to myself. Paul says that we clergy are "ministers of the New Testament, not in the letter but in the spirit"; obviously we are both, for the letter has its surface value, though there is always a wider, more mystic meaning beneath the letter.

It is fairly certain that in "the letter," that is, on the surface plane, the words I have quoted from this morning's Epistle refer to human devils, and convey a caution, purposely hidden under a cryptic form of expression,

like St John's letter from Patmos, to warn the Christians, in a time of bitter persecution, against the blackmailers and accusers who were ready, on the shallowest evidence, to drag them before the Roman Tribunal. The translation of the cypher is, "Be watchful, for your adversary the accuser, the paid spy who will impeach you as a Christian before the Roman *Prætor*, as a roaring lion goeth about seeking whom he may devour." This interpretation, which I believe to be the correct one, suggests the question what is to become of the personal archfiend, in whom we were all brought up to believe, and whose existence and position seem so established in Scripture? If there are any who are satisfied with the traditional conception, and who obtain comfort and strength to live better lives by believing in the devil, by all means let them do so. I cannot honestly find room in my own mind for the conventional conception of the archfiend as an objective personality. Moreover, I do not myself believe in any spirit personalities in the other world, either good or bad, that have not been human beings on earth. I have fully stated my belief about angels in a recently published volume. I think the

greater number of the beings called angels are not persons but mind-forms of the Universal Intelligence, acting dynamically and helpfully upon the human intelligence. Michael, for example, is the mind-form of divine victory. Michael and his angels destroying Satan and his angels, and "Satan and his angels" are obviously the wrong thoughts that attack us and sometimes conquer us. The great nature-powers, the cosmic laws, are called angels in the Apocalypse. We read of the "Angel to whom it is given to hurt the earth and the sea," evidently referring to the cosmic law that we call the law of gravitation. These angels are not persons. The angels that are persons are discarnate human beings in the spirit world, who are privileged, in certain crises, to help and protect their brethren still in the flesh, and who compass us about as a "great cloud of witnesses." I see no reason to doubt the vision of angels who are said to have protected the rear-guard of the British Army at one great crisis in the retreat from Mons.

There are, also, doubtless, other discarnate human beings who are not angels and not good. They have not yet begun the improvement, in God's school of progression, which willulti-

mately perfect them. They are still hankering after the material limitations they have left, and their influence upon human beings still in the flesh would not be good, though their power for evil is strictly limited.

But this hypothesis that all the spirits in the other world have been incarnate in this world obliterates the conventional conception of an archfiend who has never been a human being.

Do we lose or gain by this obliteration?

So long as "our adversary the devil," who owes his existence to Zoroastrianism misunderstood, is personified as a theological proposition, or exalted into a luminous demigod by the splendid imagery of a Milton, or anthropomorphized into a Prince Rimanes by the powerful imagination of a novelist, he will be the object of ridicule, terror, or admiration, according to the mental mood of the moment. If, however, the conception is taken out of the mythical and recognized as representing a practical influence in daily life, a verbal accommodation symbolizing the educative conflict through which all who live to the perfect development of manhood must pass, it becomes both reasonable and possible

for man, without losing his sense of the Allness of God, to "resist him, stedfast in the faith," and in resisting, to grow, morally, intellectually, spiritually, onwards, upwards, heavenwards.

Two popularly accepted theories of those concrete terms Satan and Devil ought certainly to be obliterated. One, the tradition that the Satan of the Scriptures is a fallen archangel. The other, that he is some powerful anti-God, infernally divine, exercising authority independent of the All-Father. The popular tradition of "our adversary the devil" being a fallen archangel really rests on the shallowest foundation. Apart from the world-wide influence of Milton's "Paradise Lost," the whole theory depends upon two apparently emphatic declarations in the New Testament; the one in 2 Peter ii. 4, "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to Tartarus"; and the other in the sixth verse of the Epistle of Jude, "and the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains." Now, I have often pointed out that both these passages are quotations from the notoriously apocryphal book called the Book of Enoch. The Book

of Enoch was unknown in the Hebrew Scriptures ; it was written, in the Hebrew language, just before the birth of Christ, during the reign of Herod the Great, a period of peculiar, moral, spiritual, and intellectual darkness. It was translated into Greek, and found its way into the hands of the early Christians ; for a few centuries it was alluded to and quoted, and it then disappeared from view. One complete version, in the Ethiopian language, was discovered in Abyssinia and brought to England, and a copy was deposited in the Bodleian Library in Oxford. It was translated by the Archbishop of Cashel, then Professor of Hebrew in the University of Oxford, and he says, " that the author of this book was uninspired will scarcely now be questioned by any man." I repeat this as proof that these two passages from St Peter and St Jude are not a sufficient authority for a theory supported by no other utterance in Scripture. Secondly, whatever may be the place and power of this kingdom of darkness and its traditional prince, it involves denial of the omnipotence of All-Fatherhood to believe in the dualistic theory which implies Satan's independence of God. When, in the inspired doxology to the Lord's

Prayer, we adoringly cry, "Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory," we emphatically deny that absolute good and absolute evil can co-exist in the same universe, and affirm that there can be only one primal cause, one ultimate authority, one supreme power, which is God alone. Think what you please of Satan, the devil, evil; believe the worst of their subtlety, malignity, and power; personify them to the utmost; but be unchangeably certain that the thing signified by the words could not be but for the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of the "One God and Father of all, Who is above all and through all and in all"; could not exist one hour apart from His sanction; must be, therefore, for ultimate purposes of eternal good and will pass away when its work is done, "in the times of the restitution of all things, of which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets, since the world began." God is all and all is God, and the Eternal Father again and again takes upon Himself the responsibility for the shadow-side of creation. "I create evil, saith the Lord;" "Is there evil in the city, and I have not done it? saith the Lord;" "I

gave them statutes that were not good, saith the Lord, to the end that they might learn." These passages prove that the Satan of the Old Testament is a personified symbol of the principle which is the testing agent, the educator, the drill-sergeant of God's pupils in this school-world of sense and time. Then, again, never forget that passage in 2 Timothy ii. 25, upon which the Revised Version has at last cast, but only timidly in the margin, the light of true interpretation: "If, peradventure, God may give them repentance unto the knowledge of the truth; and they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by the Lord's servant" (marginal reference, "by the devil") "unto the will of God."

Augustine, strongly inclined as he was by early training to the theories of dualism, recognized this deep ultimate truth, that it is only indirectly, as the Lord's servant, that the devil could take any one captive. "The devil," he says, "nothing does, nothing can do, unless either sent or permitted." "The temptations of the devil," he says in another place, "God applies to the good of His saints." Whatever, then, may be the mystery of the

strangely intermingled good and evil in God's world, whatever may be the force of the verbal accommodations under which evil is sometimes personified, one thought should be ever present with us, one clear, assured, unalterable conviction sustain and comfort us—the devil, whatever he is, is not independent of God. The victory is fixed, certain, appointed from everlasting. Good shall triumph ultimately, everywhere and for ever. Destinations shall come to a perpetual end, for "Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen."

How then ought we, who believe in the Allness of God, to estimate what is called the Devil? One of the deepest thinkers I have ever known once said, "We need a new theory of Satan, more profound and more penetrating than the old fables of nursery tradition give us, more in accordance with the spiritual insight gained under our Christian philosophy. This power of evil that besets us; this compound force of passion and materialism, selfishness and appetite, unhallowed ambition and unspiritual flesh, is not a less fearful, but a much more terrible, because a more cunning, adversary than the old imagery

represented it." Under these words you find the truth, so far as the advanced thinker is concerned. The real devil, against whom we have to be sober and vigilant, is within man ; it is carried about within the human heart. It is the animal part of human nature ; the power in ourselves that makes for unrighteousness ; the lower affections, thoughts, and appetites, by resisting which we can alone become moral beings. "I find," says St Paul, "another law in my members warring against the law of my mind"; that is the devil. "Nothing," says our Lord, "entering into a man from without can defile a man"; no devil enters into you from without, for "out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries," etc. The allegory in Genesis of what is called the Fall represents man preferring the outward to the inward, the apparent to the real, the temporal to the eternal, the selfish to the God-like.

The very words "Satan" and "devil" in Greek are not names, but nouns, denoting a certain kind of character. Satan is "adversary," devil is "slanderer." In the first Epistle to Timothy, "not slanderers" is *diaboloi*. In the second Epistle, "Men shall

be lovers of their own selves, false accusers," the word is *diaboloi*, "devils." So also when he says, "Speak, that they be not false accusers," the word again is *diaboloi*, "devils."

Here, then, surely is our lesson from the Epistle of to-day: Be self-controlled, be watchful; for the kingdom of evil, like the Kingdom of Heaven, "cometh not with observation, neither shall they say, Lo here, or, Lo there, for behold the kingdom of evil is within you." Our Lord called Judas a devil, and Peter a Satan, because within them were the qualities described by the words.

In the appalling cruelties, bestialities and atrocities perpetrated by German soldiers, under the orders of the General Staff, in this present war, we have had positive demonstration that no devil imaginable in the spirit-world can approach the moral degradation possible to a human devil. Then, without doubt, the devil whom we are to resist, "stediast in the faith," is the self-devil, the demands of our lower, our animal nature. When the self-devil is not resisted he grows into a monster, a roaring lion destroying all that is pure and good and true. He has thus evidenced himself conspicuously in Belgium

and Northern France. Sometimes he is a serpent hidden in the heart, even when the life is a religious life, hiding from us the self that is really ruling us, the self that is full of jealousy and fancied slights, and which makes others bear our nerve irritation, when we are careworn and harassed. The favourite jungle of the self-devil is the small social circle, or the home. A home where the self-devil has been conquered is a happy home. After Gordon's death at Khartoum, his sister said to me, "No one knew what he was until they had seen him in his home—the most considerate, the most affectionate, the most unselfish of men." That is, he was a human being without the self-devil.

The self-devil is to be vigilantly detected and resisted, "stern in the faith," the faith that brings poise and calmness into life. The great Emperor Antoninus Pius, who did not know what we know as to the Immanence of God, when dying, gave to the Praetorian Guard the watchword "*Æquanimitas.*" He had learned, by long experience, that equanimity, which implies conquest of the self-devil, was the keynote of happiness. The faith that leads to equanimity is the

assurance that at the very centre of our being there is a power which, in our highest moments, we know is "more than conqueror through Him who loves us." The assurance that we can realize the Presence in which we live, and hold conscious communion with the Father-Spirit, the Source of all life, love and power. The faith that enables you calmly and quietly, when your nerves are on the rack, to rise out of your sense impressions, and foolish fretfulness, and affirm, "I am spirit. As spirit I am one with the originating spirit. The spirit in me, and round me, is Infinite love and peace and power." The Faith that enables you to rest in Divine Love when all conditions seem against you, and to affirm, "God is my strength, God is my Life, I will cast all my care on Him." This it is to be clad in "the whole armour of God," and when, in that armour, we resist the self-devil, he will flee from us, that is, his influence will grow weaker and weaker until conduct is transfigured, and nature regenerated, and character formed, and we know, really know, with the conscious mind, that God is all and all is God, and God is Love.

GOING FORTH TO WAR

“Take ye every male from twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to the war.”
—NUMBERS i. 3.

IT is not possible at the present time to interest the minds of Englishmen upon any subject not directly connected with this amazing Armageddon, unprecedented in all history for magnitude and carnage, in which we are fighting, for England, for the liberty of Western Europe, and for the possibility of future peace in the world. Therefore I begin with that fine recruiting text from the Old Testament which Lord Kitchener might well have appropriated as his justification for his appeal to the nation: “Take ye every male from twenty years old and upwards, all that are able to go forth to the war.” If the nation had listened years ago to Lord Roberts, and insisted upon the military training of every male, we should have had thousands more efficient soldiers at this moment at the front. In a periodical pub-

lished in favour of peace I observe a rebuke to the ministers of the Churches. The paragraph says, "One of the most significant facts of the present time is the failure of religious teachers to speak wise, encouraging, or comforting words to the nation at war." Wisdom. Encouragement. Comfort. That is where apparently we ministers fail. There may well be divergence of opinion as to what words are "wise," but, in my opinion, it is wise for a religious teacher to bear witness to the perfect righteousness of this present war, and endeavour to guide the minds of his hearers into a calm, trustful realization of God, not as an objective personal world-ruler, but as Infinite Mind expressing Himself in phenomena. I am confronted every day with the question, "Why, why does God allow these horrors, why does not God stop the war?" It is a question that has in it no trace of unbelief, but it is a protest, almost a resentment, arising from a wrong conception of God. It is as when the prophet Habakkuk exclaimed, "Oh Lord, how long shall I cry and Thou wilt not hear, cry unto Thee of violence, and Thou wilt not save?"

I think a "wise" word would be to en-

courage a realization of the true conception of God which silences such questions. The human mind cannot, of course, form any mental image of God—that would be to place the Infinite under a mental limitation—but we can see Him as Moses, figuratively speaking, saw Him, “sheltered by cleft of rock and shadow of hand.” As all things that are, are vibrations, modes of motion, of Infinite spirit, we can know God by observing the qualities of His self-manifestations; as the Apostle puts it, we can know Him “by the things that are made.” We know, for example, that God is life, by the myriad teeming lives in every inch of space. We know that God is beauty, by the incomparable majesty of sky and stars and clouds and mountains and valleys and flowers and shells and feathers. We know that God is love, for humanity, when not hypnotized by false German philosophy, has recognized love as the greatest thing in the universe. We know that Love is the ruling emotion of our best self, we know, therefore, that the nature of the Infinite consciousness, of which we are minute mirrors, must be Love. But we can know God even more accurately. The Infinite Spirit has

given us one wholly unmistakable specialization of what He is in Himself. In the fulness of time He embodied Himself in one individual life-centre, who so perfectly represented the Divine Intelligence and Love, that of Him it was proclaimed that men "saw the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Pure Spirit, Infinite Spirit, may be, is, unthinkable ; but when this unthinkable Originator, the logical inference from the phenomena of the universe, and from all creaturely life, specializes, embodies His qualities in one perfect human being for our observation, He is no longer unthinkable. In Infinity, for ever unthinkable ; in character, in quality, in love, in purpose, eminently thinkable, knowable, lovable, and Immanent, in the revelation of the Incarnation.

How can this conception of God, knowable in His manifestations, be brought into practical application on the plane of ordinary experience so as to free the mind from resentment against a World Ruler when the world goes wrong ? There are bitter sorrows inseparable from human life, and some imagine that God ought to prevent them ; but even the Deist who believes in Habakkuk's God,

the extra-cosmic God, has his reply based upon the incontrovertible axiom I so often repeat, to which, logically, there is no answer. All that is included in the dark side of life either is, or is not, part of the universal order of the Cosmos, for which the Originating Spirit is primarily responsible. If it is part of the universal order of the Cosmos, then it only appears to us to be disorder, chaos, and it must be included in the "all things that work together for good." If it is not part of the universal order of the Cosmos, then God is not Infinite, and we are compelled to predicate another creative source, in antagonism to the good God, a dualism which wipes out even Deism and leaves us with no God except some idol of the mind. But he who believes in the Immanence and the Allness of God, and to whom God is not an external Ruler to be placated, but a Presence to be realized and loved, knows that peace comes from thinking rightly of God. When you have discovered your real relation to God as one of the vehicles for the self-realization of the Infinite mind, your outlook on life is changed; you see things on the plane of the real, not on the plane of the phenomenal;

when you are confronted with the dark side of life, instead of being angry with an external God, you mentally retreat into the inmost of yourself, " the secret place of the Most High " ; you fix your mind upon the central fountain of being, and you say calmly and quietly, " We humans are spirit, we are one with God, nothing can hurt us, our real selves, God in us is infinite love, and peace, and wisdom " ; and as you realize this, you are sending healing thoughts through yourself, and out into the world at large.

For example, if some one, shocked by the abominable atrocities of these German barbarians, asks you, " Where is now thy God ? why does he not interfere ? why does He allow these horrors ? " you who have realized God, and have found your right relation as an individual to the Originating Spirit, try to make your questioner understand that we humans can only come to consciousness of perfection through the instrumentality of the experience of imperfection, and that such interference on the part of an external world-ruler, as your questioner expects, would frustrate the whole purpose of life's education and stagnate human evolution. These hideous atrocities

which have shocked the whole world are an effect in an immutable cosmic order which is part of the evolutionary law of human life, which law works unfailingly, in the long run, for universal improvement; to suspend this law, even once, by omnipotent interference, would be to obliterate it wholly.

It is useless to ask why. Creation is Infinite Mind thinking into existence phenomena in which to realize qualities perceptible in Himself. When He imaged forth human life-centres in which He might realize His highest quality, namely, Love, it was necessary to give human beings a will, because Love cannot be automatic as is the cosmic consciousness. The misuse of this human will means the concentration of human desire upon self instead of God, and the results are monstrous ambitions of world-dominion, like those of the German Empire, self-worship, cruelty, and such horrors as the atrocities in Belgium.

If an objective world-ruler, from motives of compassion, were to intervene to prevent the results of the misuse of the human will, it would reduce mankind to a condition of sterile indolence or hopeless uncertainty. It

is essential to the evolution of humanity, it is of the utmost educational value, that effects, however painful, should always follow causes. Experience may be a hard school, but it is the school of common sense. If God had made man automatically perfect from the first, like a correct chronometer, man would have been innocent, but he could never have become a moral being. The only school of character is the incontrovertible axiom that effects, however terrible, must follow causes.

This truth, I know, conveys no consolation to broken hearts and bereaved homes, but it is the law of life. The Virgin Mary's heart was broken by the atrocity on Calvary, but there was no interference of an omnipotent external Power. I know we cannot yet live sufficiently above the plane of the mortal to realize this, therefore we must mourn and suffer, as the mother of Jesus mourned and suffered on Calvary. Thousands of husbands and fathers and sons must pass out of the body before this war, so criminally forced upon us, is ended, but those heroes "are not dead, they have awakened from the dream of life." Thousands have passed out

of the physical body already, bravely laying down their lives for their country; they are not dead, they are knowing now the eternal reward for vicarious sacrifice, and, as Colonel Hay said, in his grand poem called "The Prairie Belle," "Christ will never turn His back upon a man who died for men."

When we know that God is not only Transcendent but Immanent, we know that God is Himself in the heart and centre of this school of pain and sorrow. It is part of God's self-sacrifice entailed by creation. God does not permit, He endures. God did not "permit" Calvary, He endured it.

Belief in the Immanence of God alone solves the problem of how to reconcile the world of ideal and the world of action. The ideal is the ultimate perfection of humanity in accordance with the original purpose of Infinite Mind. The action is the recognized law of evolution, which is the growth of right asserting itself by overcoming, at any cost, sometimes, as now, at fearful cost, the resistance of wrong. In that action our nation is at this moment engaged, and God, the driving power behind evolution, will, in His own time,

crown the splendid courage of our arms with victory. Whether they are conscious of it or not, our brave soldiers are filled with that sublime spirit of determination and chivalry which underlay the great battle-hymn of the American Union :—

“ In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born, across the sea,
With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me,
As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free,
While God is marching on.”

In this thesis, namely, that God, under the self-assumed limitation of creation, is not an extra-cosmic Sovereign, but the immanent driving power behind evolution, suffering with all sensitive life, from the sparrow to the man, lies, in my opinion, the word of “ Wisdom.”

But the periodical to which I alluded demands also the “ encouraging ” word. There is a saying in the Book of Job which always encourages me personally. It is, “ He knoweth the way that I take, and when He hath tried me I shall come forth as gold.” I love that inspired utterance. In the personal

appropriation of it lies the secret of encouragement in the darkest days. "He knoweth." There is then no loneliness to the believer in Divine Immanence, and no loss of the personal pronoun in addressing Infinite Mind. A sympathizing Presence, "closer than breathing," is influencing every step in your path through life. "He knoweth." Divine Love is the only one who does know you, nothing is hid from Him, for He dwelleth in you. "When He hath tried me." Then my painful experiences are not the dominance of some evil chance against me. "Through such tribulation" we enter into the Kingdom, and the Latin word *Tribulatio* signifies the separation of wheat from husk with the flail. The trials of life are the strokes of the flail which separate the husk of flesh from the good wheat of spirit, and though, in second causes, that flail may be in a cruel "mailed fist," the first cause of all causes "knoweth," and "when He hath (thus) tried me I shall come forth as gold."

Never allow yourself to be discouraged. He who in His laboratory of nature can turn flint stones into amethysts, and coal into diamonds, can, in the laboratory of His school

for souls, transmute the dross of human nature into the pure gold of spirit.

Then for a "comforting" word I would like to speak the word "Patience." St Peter says, "Add to your faith Patience." I am speaking to those who have faith, many of you great faith. "Add to your faith Patience." It is clear that the allied armies must in no sense make peace until the power of German militarism is utterly broken. Germany has vast resources, it will take long before that end is attained. Time is on our side; the longer this terrible war lasts the stronger shall we become, and the weaker, financially and numerically, will become the forces against which we are fighting. It is well for England that her military affairs have been directed by one who, in addition to his great qualities as a soldier, possessed in an exceptional degree the virtue of patience. The indomitable patience with which he built the railway to Khartoum, which led to the conquest of the Soudan, was a lesson to the world. He had faith that he could do it, and he added "to his faith patience." Discouraged by engineers, hindered by floods and sandstorms and dervishes, he persevered, and

succeeded. Thank God that same patience, added to the highest military efficiency, has been ruling at our War Office in recent times.

Then let us also, in our sphere, be patient. Remember what Whittier says about the angel of patience :—

“ He walks with thee, that angel kind,
And gently whispers, be resigned,
Bear up, bear on, the end shall tell
The dear Lord ordereth all things well.”

In this “ waiting for the end,” we English, especially those of us who have loved ones at the front, will need much patience.

Return briefly to my recruiting text: “ Let every male that is able go forth to the war.” Never did Patriotism make a stronger demand upon the self-sacrifice of Englishmen than at the present moment: “ Every man that is able should go forth to the war.” Apart from the duty of winning by our arms freedom for Western Europe, we are fighting for our very existence as a nation. England will never forget, ought never to forget, the insolent braggadocio of the German Emperor’s army order issued from Headquarters on August 19, 1914 :—

“ It is my Royal and Imperial Command that you

concentrate your energies for the immediate present upon one single purpose, and that is that you address all your skill and all the valour of my soldiers to exterminate first the treacherous English, and walk over General French's contemptible little Army."

I forbear comment. The conduct of our army has covered this insolence with ridicule. But let this "Royal and Imperial Command" open our eyes wide to what would be the fate of England if this ruthless exterminator succeeded in landing his Huns and Vandals on our shores. It is not the German people whom it is the duty of the Allies to crush. The German people are naturally as kindly a people as any others. They have been hypnotized into their insane hatred of us by the Satanic philosophy of their University Professors, and the elaborate campaign of lies prepared by the criminal leaders of the military class. Certain words in Thessalonians might have been written expressly for the Germans, "God shall send them a strong delusion that they may believe a lie." From this "strong delusion," this "believing a lie," this hypnotic dream, it will be the work of the Allies to awaken them by crushing the military despotism that is ruining irreparably their fair land.

We desire no retribution so far as they are concerned ; we know there have been atrocities, and we now know that they were commanded by authority. We know that every code of honourable warfare accepted by civilized peoples has been infringed by the Germans, but for this the initiators are to blame far more than the perpetrators. The German troops have carried out to the full Bismarck's brutal order recorded in his " German War Strategy " : " Cause to non-combatants the maximum of suffering, leave the women and children nothing but their eyes to weep with." For the barbarities with which this infamous order was obeyed the dynasty of the Hohenzollerns shall pay to the uttermost farthing, and the whole civilized world will demand it, but we feel sorry for the deceived German people.

Meanwhile we English cannot all fight, but we can all pray, the right kind of prayer, the prayer that makes our minds channels through which God can send His blessing ; the prayer which mentally holds the whole situation into the Divine Presence, the source of all strength and wisdom. Patriotism demands as much as that from each one of us.

St Paul estimates that the praying men of a nation are as important a factor in its welfare as the courage of its soldiers. "I exhort," he says, "that supplication be made for all men, for kings and all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, and that intercession be made without wrath or doubting." In that prayer I am prepared to include, "without wrath," the poor suffering German people, hypnotized, deceived, lied to by their unprincipled ruler, and already bereaved of millions of men, all of whom had some one to love them and weep for them. So, in this present crisis, Patriotism calls us all to prayer, compassion calls us all to intercession. At some definite time each day, hold intensely in your mind, while realizing Infinite Spirit, first, the whole situation, thinking thoughts of brotherliness towards all men. Then mentally concentrate upon our heroes who are fearlessly facing pain and death—upon the doctors, nurses, members of the Army Service Corps, and include the suffering animals. Let the prayer be a quiet, trusting, mind-blending with the Infinite Mind. Let it be prayer without panic, communion with God without wrath

against man, and intercession without anxiety. "In nothing be anxious," says St Paul, "but in everything with prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

RENEWAL

"Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day."—2 COR. iv. 16.

ON the lower plane, the plane of physical sensation, of bodily illness, this inspired utterance is ever a cheering affirmation. It is natural to dislike the pain and weakness of a perishing "outward man," and it is a cry of triumph over the body to repeat this affirmation. "The outward man is perishing," let it perish, we have had enough of it, the more definitely it perishes the more assuredly is the inward man, the real man, being renewed, joyfully anticipating the happy day of its emancipation from the flesh body. On the plane, however, of uncompleted education, the affirmation is also full of value. It suggests an intelligent theory of what St Paul calls "keeping under the body and bringing it into subjection." The idea has prevailed in the Western world that it gives a certain satisfaction to our Father in Heaven if we

undergo, during the season of Lent, some self-appointed bodily inconveniences.

Obviously, in themselves, fastings and self-imposed privations are of no avail unless they tend to a realization that our education in the flesh consists in co-operating with our higher nature, and "bringing into subjection" our lower carnal self, and the first step is to recognize the eternal fact that every man has within him a higher self and is in essence divine, and that the "inward man," the spirit, is his real self.

Awakened spiritual consciousness assures us that man consists of one perfect life, dwelling within another imperfect life, and gradually so outgrowing the imperfect life that it may be said to "perish," though in fact it is at-one-d, absorbed. Paul expresses this absorption as "the outward man perishing, and the inward man being renewed from day to day." Now this "inward man," that is renewed from day to day, is not in full working harmony until it has been born into your conscious recognition. It is within you, alive and potential, but unless it is born, "born anew," the man, in whom it is, does not "see the Kingdom of Heaven" within him. To every

man living you might say "you have a power within you, probably not yet realized, because it is not yet born into your spiritual consciousness, but it is awaiting recognition." The "inward man" is the Mystic Christ within us, our share of the Logos. It is our equipment from God, it was in us, germinally, when we were born, it was claimed for us in the Sacrament of Baptism, but it has to be "born again," born from above; it has to come into recognition, and ultimately be the "Lord" of the organism in which it has been born.

Our Lord did not definitely reveal this truth; the time had not fully come. He inspired St Paul to unfold it, but He hinted it repeatedly to minds perceptive of the mystic meaning underlying all that He said, and I have many times pointed out that it is the obvious meaning of that question He once put to the Pharisees: "What think ye of the Christ, whose Son is He?" When they replied, "The son of David," He reminded them that the words in the psalm are, "The Lord said unto my Lord," and He asked, "If David called Him Lord, how is He his son?"

It was clearly a suggestion of a mystic

interpretation. On the surface plane it is obvious that the question has scarcely any meaning. A man can easily become the Lord of his own Father. If the Prince Consort had survived Queen Victoria, Edward VII. would have been the Lord of his own Father. Interpreted on the spiritual plane the question suggests the deep mysteries of God. David, when according to current belief he wrote the 110th psalm (and our Lord always spoke from current beliefs), was King. He could not have meant by "my Lord" any earthly ruler over himself. He was uttering words with a profound mystic meaning. "The Lord," the Hebrew word there is "Jehovah," "said unto my Lord," the Hebrew word there is "Adonai," "Sit thou upon My right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool." The Infinite Mind said to its specialization; the Universal said to the conditioned; God said to His Incarnation; Infinite Mind said to the Logos, "Sit thou upon My right hand." It was an inspired dream-prophecy of the Immanence of the Universal Spirit in all men, and the Specialization of that Immanence in one member of the family of David, who was to be the sample, the guarantee of the human

race. Therefore the "my Lord" of the 110th psalm is Infinite Mind self-expressed under human conditions; under the form of Him whom we adore as the Lord Jesus Christ, the Historic Christ, the Specialization of the mystic universal Christ.

Then follows that question, "Whose Son is He? If David called Him Lord, how is He his son?" Whose Son is He, speaking mystically? Think of the mass of controversial theological literature that in twenty centuries has been created by that question considered on the surface plane, the historic plane. Think of the bitter strife between Arius and Athanasius which rent the Church in twain; of the cruel persecutions for definitions which have arisen from it. We have, all our lives, been challenged with the question, from our Confirmation preparation to the present time, "What think ye of this unique Personality?" "Whose Son is He?" What is the true answer, I mean the mystic answer? I do not mean Strauss' answer, or Renan's answer, or Goethe's answer, or even the answer of legitimate dogmatic theology. They all express a phase of the truth on different planes.

Whose Son is He on the mystic plane? Jesus never called Himself the Son of David, though He once stopped when a blind beggar thus addressed Him. He never once called Himself the Son of Mary, and never once addressed her as mother. He called Himself "the Son of man," the Son of humanity, the specialization of the Sonship which is germinal in every human being born into the world; the embodiment, for purposes of recognition and observation, of the Divine Logos or Reason of the Creator, which is the inmost life in all men. The Christ, therefore, though objectively individualized in the Lord Jesus for purposes of manifestation, is not one man only but the name for the Sonship of all men, and the future Christ of God will not be one man only, but all men in Him. The life, the character, the indwelling power, the spirit, of the Archetypal specimen of the Universal Sonship must be "born" in every man, thus becoming in the mystic sense the "son" of every man, and, gradually, the "Lord" of every man into whose recognition He has been born. He must be both Son and Lord of every heart that He inhabits, sanctifies, and saves. "Whosoever shall do the will,"

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says the Lord Jesus, " the same is My mother." The Mystic Christ has been " born " in that man as truly as the historic Christ was born of Mary ; nay, more truly, in proportion as spiritual realities are more true than natural symbols. The answer, therefore, of awakened spiritual consciousness to the question, " What think ye of the Christ ? " would be, varying of course with the personal equation of each, " I think the historic Christ, Jesus of Nazareth, is to the Infinite Creative Mind what light is to the sun, not something separate, but the revealer, the forth-bringer of what the solar orb is in itself." And as to the question, " Whose Son is He ? " He, as the embodiment of the Universal Christ, the Mystic Christ, is man's heart's Son, as well as man's heart's Lord. Our inmost being has been a womb to bear Him ; our human heart is His cradle ; our human body His temple, and " The Lord," the Universal Soul, hath said unto " my Lord," that is, to the Christ germinally immanent within me, " I will make thine enemies thy footstool." In this lies the indication of every man's duty in life, and the irrefragable promise of ultimate perfection, both for the individual and for the race.

St Paul, in his letter to the Colossians, takes this for granted, and bases upon it man's assurance. This knowledge, he would say, differentiates Christianity from all the previous self-revelations of God. This is "the mystery hid from the foundation of the world," namely, that the secret of human life is the divine nature in every man, "the hope of glory"; not in a chosen few, but in every man.¹ The objective personality called the Christ, our Lord Jesus Christ, is the visible embodiment in Full-orbed perfection, of an attribute and potentiality which belongs to all; and that attribute and potentiality is the hereditary divine nature enshrined within all, the Sonship germinal in all, and to be "born" in all, for the Mystic Christ, the Universal Christ, the Logos, is the Son of man, of humanity; and the imperishable secret of human life is, "Christ in all men, the hope of glory."

I contend that the clear recognition of the truth is the meaning of being "born anew."

¹ "The Neoplatonists said that there is a divine element in man. The Christian philosophers assented fervently, and raised the old disagreeable question, 'Is it in every man? in the publicans and the harlots, as well as in the philosophers?' We say that it is." —Charles Kingsley.

The discovery of the hidden Christ in himself is man's new birth. It is of the utmost importance to know this. Johannes Schaeffer in 1677 wrote that poem of which one verse is,

“Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born,
If He be not born in thee thy soul is still forlorn.”

There are symptoms by which you may know it, for when this “inward man” is stirring within you, you find yourself thinking differently of God and of your relation to Him. The wrong sense of “separation” passes away. God is no longer a despot to be appeased, but a dear Presence to be loved. Your centre is changed, your life no longer revolves round the lesser self, “the outward man,” and when your centre is changed everything is changed. You begin to think differently of yourself, you begin to think from the inward man, not the outward man. Then you begin to think differently of your fellow-men; you see others, however unlovable, after the spirit, not after the flesh, you see the good in others, and the bad in yourself. You begin to realize Stephenson's lines :—

“ There is so much bad in the best of us,
And so much good in the worst of us,
That it ill behoves any of us
To find fault with the rest of us.”

When the Mystic Christ is “ born ” within you see the good in others even if you have to differ from them fundamentally.

Then you have also a broader realization of the oneness of the race as an organic whole in which each individual is under hereditary obligation to “ do for all what he alone does best.” This will sometimes involve you in apparent contradictions. For example, you will realize that in this monstrous war, in which the Allies are fighting for the peace of the world, and the greatest moral issues that ever affected humanity, Britain is sacrificing her brave sons for the good of the race as an organic whole, and that “ all things,” even war, “ work together for good.”

Mrs Cheyne has ably expressed the coming of the good of the race out of the horrors of the war in her recent poem upon Lent :—

“ Manhood upon the monstrous Cross of War
Must bleed and die, unnamed, and buried be.
Across the wondering world, extended far,
His arms are nailed, in powerless misery.

Through sacrifice, the Perfect Will is done ;
The tomb is shattered, Manhood walks abroad
With re-born Womanhood ; and earth is won
Anew—a living Garden of the Lord,

Wherein the fruits of mercy, peace and love,
Forgiveness, healing, grow, all gold and red ;
And living streams of crystal ever flow ;
Upon whose banks there are no Dead, no Dead."

To realize even the fringe of this profound truth that humanity is an expression of God's consciousness will enable you to face life and its perplexities and sorrows with new-born courage. You will recognize that spiritual growth is not an occasional thrill, but the steady evolution of a deeply hidden germ whose power of ultimately conquering every hostile environment is involved in its very nature ; and this conviction will cheer and illuminate you in the inevitable periods of depression of which we are all conscious at this time of world-wide war. Growth is slow ; there is no hurry in evolution ; the God within is making us and making us slowly, as is His wont. We are "His workmanship," and His mills grind slowly. But God's life in man is man's unfailing assurance and strong consolation ; and we can bear with our timid, suffering, "outward man" under the glorious

affirmation, "I am spirit, God is Spirit, I have oneness with God," and God, the Logos, Christ, is "in me the hope of glory."

One important consideration follows. The secret of the evolution of the "Christ in us the hope of glory" is not, in the case of man, correspondence with environment, but victory over environment. The Mystic Christ must be "Lord" as well as "Son"; and the environment over which the Christ in us is to be "Lord" is our sense-nature with its animal fears, impressions and desires. The deeper recognition of the majestic truth that we are God-inhabited, so far from emancipating us from struggle, makes new demands, and brings with it a deeper consciousness of responsibility towards the higher self. The dignity of humanity consists in the fact that its evolution depends upon co-operation with the stirrings of the Christ within. We are fellow-workers with God in our own progressive sanctification.

Now as the moral issues of life are mental, I am convinced that the secret of the growth of the "Christ in you" is the mental habit of quick realization, in every moral crisis, of the Presence in which we "live, and move, and have our being." Witness in the

hidden lives of the greatest men the strengthening effect of this practice. Such men will make what we call mistakes (though there are no mistakes in the full purpose of God, the mistakes are part of the purpose, and men and nations learn as much by their mistakes as by their successes). They may make mistakes; but they are kept in perfect peace because their minds are stayed on Him. Once before I made a quotation from "The Life of Mr Gladstone," by Lord Morley. The biographer has given us glimpses, from Mr Gladstone's most private diary, of this ceaseless lifting up of the heart, always, everywhere, in every crisis. It was his custom when waiting to catch the Speaker's eye in the House of Commons to occupy the interval in intense mental prayer. On one occasion, when Chancellor of the Exchequer, before rising to make his first great budget speech, his lips were observed moving. Members thought he was rehearsing his figures. His diary tells us what he was doing. He was murmuring the words of the psalmist, "Turn Thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; give Thy strength to Thy servant, and help the son of Thy handmaid."

Then, again, another method of training the conscious mind to recognize that measureless love linked to omnipotent purpose is actually within you, at your disposal, is to form the habit of sometimes actually addressing the divinity within you. Not in depreciation of the glorious privilege of speaking to the Divine Love-Presence outside you. To be able at any moment to be absolutely alone with God, even in a crowded street, is a blessed privilege; but do you ever definitely speak to the "Christ in you"? You may have to face perplexing problems, or you may be under the sudden strain of physical pain, or you may be conscious that the root of some long-abandoned sense-habit is beginning to throb; well, for the moment, depart from the privilege of reaching outside yourself to blend your mind with God, abstract your thoughts from all external conditions, concentrate upon that innermost Presence, say to It, "Christ in me, Infinite Spirit Immanent, Thou art in the centre of my being; Thou art the Principle within me of Strength, Purity, Self-control, Courage, Wisdom; Thou hast been born into recognition in the Kingdom of Heaven within me, may that Principle now radiate through

my whole being, be this day 'Lord' as well as 'Son' of my Soul, bring Thyself into manifestation through this organism of mine, will Thy will within me, make my conscious mind function this day only from the Christ Mind, the 'Christ in me the hope of glory.' " Then don't wait for, or expect, any strong emotion or sense-impression, just "Be still and know" that spirit will rule body all that day, and that you will be carried through whatever difficulties are confronting you. As you form this habit you will be increasingly able to say:—

"I know, as my life grows older
And mine eyes have clearer sight,
That under each rank wrong somewhere
There lies the root of right;
That each sorrow has its purpose,
By the sorrowing oft unguessed;
That, as sure as the sun brings morning,
Whatever is, is best.

I know that there are no errors
In the great eternal plan,
And that all things work together
For the final good of man.
And I know when my soul speeds onward
In its grand eternal quest,
I shall say, as I look backwards,
Whatever is, is best."

THE WEAKNESS OF GOD

“ The weakness of God is stronger than men.”—
I COR. i. 25.

THE Incarnation of God in the man Christ Jesus reveals, both in Bethlehem’s cradle and on Calvary’s Cross, the mystic meaning underlying this antithesis of St Paul. It must have been intensely true to the Apostle himself, for, as he tells the Corinthians in his second letter, his message from on High, when he felt physically crushed, was, “ My strength is made perfect in weakness.” The utterance justifies tranquil optimism in all circumstances ; it forbids despondency, it nerves the will, it encourages patience with the apparent tardiness and weakness of our higher self, the Mystic Christ, the “ man-child,” whom the “ Dragon ” of the physical nature “ seeks to devour.” St Paul’s paradox reminds us that the Kingdom of Heaven within us cometh “ without observation,” working slowly, secretly, silently ; raising our mental and moral standard without our

suspecting it, offering a complete contrast to the superficial, emotional struggle of the "Dragon" of the material self which it will ultimately conquer.

It leads us to the thought that the Historic Christ is the manifestation in history of a universal human experience; that the mystic Christ has to be born in us as He was born at Bethlehem, and that when He is born in us, that is, when we first know of the imperishable life within, the Mystic Christ abides in us, first, in very small degree, growing and increasing in proportion to our recognition of Him. We know that this secret, ultimately all-conquering Power is within us from those words, "Without Him was not anything made that was made, and that which was made was Life in Him."

"LIFE IN HIM."

The initial movement that caused worlds and their contents to exist was "Being," Spirit, taking "Form," existence, for the purpose of realizing His own qualities. Matter as we know it, or matter etherealized beyond our perception, can only have come from the Creative Mind of God, for God had nothing

to make worlds out of except Himself. Therefore God is the substance of all that is, realizing Himself in different degrees of consciousness in all visible forms, and the highest of these visible forms is man. God is Absolute Unity in essence, and multiplicity in manifestation. God, "Being," is identical in kind in all the forms in which He exists, though not identical in degree. The vital germ in a grain of mustard seed is of the same quality as the life-mystery hidden in the ovum of the most highly organized animal, though the functions of the life produced may greatly differ, or even seem to be in direct opposition.

The functions of vegetable and animal life, for example, appear to be curiously contradictory, though the substance, the life, is the same in both. The vegetable de-oxidizes and accumulates, the animal oxidizes and expands. In Ecclesiasticus, which is the history of the Logos, we read, "Thus we look upon all the works of the Most High, two and two, one against another"; and yet, though "one against another" in function, animal life and vegetable life are identical in reproduction and decomposition, and vegetable life obviously possesses some share of consciousness, resem-

bling what we know as mind and will. Thus God is the only substance, there is nothing but God, and everywhere God is Love, and we humans, the highest and the most necessary of the "Forms" in which "Being" realizes Himself, are always, whether we know it or not, ensphered by the Power, and ultimately irresistible purpose, of Divine Love.

That we may know this, "Being," "Spirit," specifically Incarnated Himself in one absolutely Perfect "Form," one ideal Life-centre, Jesus the Christ; and Jesus, the Christ, claimed complete identity with the whole human race in His words, "I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one," thus declaring the essential divinity of humanity. Now the dawning into individual consciousness of this truth, the recognition that the "Word made flesh" in full-orbed perfection in one illustrates the truth of human life for all, is the process which is called being "born again," the coming into your consciousness of a new life-power named by St Paul "Christ in you," and the faintest recognition of this truth changes your self-realization. When that truth is born in you, you look upon the complex being you call

yourself with a new reverence and a certain surprise. You are inclined to say, as Jacob said to his stone pillow at Bethel, "Surely the Lord is in this place (this body of mine) and I knew it not." I am a manifestation of God, a vehicle for God's consciousness, a "Form" in which "Being," is realizing Himself. It is just here that it is helpful to appropriate the mystic meaning of the antithesis of St Paul, "The weakness of God is stronger than men." When your spiritual consciousness first recognizes the truth that the Creative Mind is actually within you, and that your real self is inseverable from God, you expect an immediate conquest of the "Red Dragon" of your physical self. Your logical faculty has convinced you, as it convinced Swedenborg, that it must be so even if you do not feel it, and you wonder why you are not immediately lifted into sinless perfection. You are disappointed at the feebleness of your realization, and the slowness of your progress. The God within you seems so much weaker than the "Red Dragon" of your physical self. First, remember this. The Mystic Christ, the "man-child," has awakened within you, in a body that has long since formed a Kingdom of

its own, with fixed habits and certain established methods of thinking. This Kingdom naturally resents the rivalry of "another King, one Jesus," the Mystic Christ, the "Kingdom of Heaven within you," and there is "War in Heaven" within you, as described in the Apocalypse, and the war will sometimes be severe and prolonged, for your new King is at first only a Babe in swaddling clothes. Then as to not realizing the transcendent truth you have intellectually accepted, do not imagine that any finite human mind could fully realize it. If this stupendous truth were suddenly poured, in one vast flood, into our full realization, it would cause insanity. The realization will, very slowly, increase, as the dawn of day gains slowly on the darkness of night. Thought, controlled by will, co-operation with the power that worketh in us, repenties after failures, unwavering affirmation that the life of God is in us, readiness to rally back upon that truth with tears in our eyes, will slowly lead on to more and more realization, and in time we shall know that the apparent "weakness" of the God within us has been in reality the whole power of the Kingdom of Heaven secretly on our side,

never coercing our will, but proving itself stronger than the most ingrained habits of the carnal nature of man.

Thus the "weakness of God" is the hidden spirit of evolution, slowly, surely overcoming all that hinders the development of the human race, and proving itself ultimately stronger than all the backsliding and delay wrought by the misuse of the human will. The "weakness of God," the gradual raising the standard within you of purity, love, brotherliness, self-sacrifice—all those transforming influences declared by the later German professors to be contemptible, will always prove, in the long run, stronger than the masterly brutality of the carnal nature of man. It transfigures individual lives, drives away fear, inspires enthusiasms that move the world, but it is only gradually, inch by inch, that this dawn of light gains upon the darkness.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews refers to this "weakness of God" when he says of those with little material force at their disposal, but with right on their side, that, "out of weakness they were made strong, they quenched the violence of fire, stopped

the mouths of lions, put to flight the armies of aliens, and endured as seeing Him who is invisible."

Now the fact and method of the Incarnation of God in Jesus the Christ is the manifestation in human history of this truth that "the weakness of God is stronger than men." The manifestation was the fullest conceivable expression of "weakness," for it was a helpless Babe. Incarnated in that "weakness" was the hidden strength of the Omnipotent Creative Spirit. It is well to emphasize the vast distinction that exists between the Immanence of the Mystic Christ in humanity and the specialization of God in the Historic Christ. The Immanence of God in humanity is a philosophical inference and a divine revelation of the highest importance. Every human being has the divine spirit within him. The Originating Spirit is Mind. Mind thinks, Imagines. As your thought of yourself is one with yourself, and yet distinct from yourself, so is God's thought of Himself one with Himself and yet distinct from Himself. God's thought of Himself is the Logos, the active, creating, self-propagating expression of Himself. When God thinks this thought it becomes differentiated into all

visible phenomena, and, in its highest intensity, into man. The self-thought of God, the Logos, Immanent in man, therefore, is "Being" expressing Himself in "Form," in humanity, the genus, the race; imaging forth from Himself personal entities in which His spirit abides, that He may, by the gradual process of evolution, train separate individual life-centres to be ultimately complete and perfect moral tabernacles of the divine nature. That is the Immanence of God in humanity. That is God's ideal, at present in the secret stage called "weakness," but ultimately "stronger than men." When this absolute oneness of the human race in God is universally recognized, with justice for its base and the common happiness of all for its object, it will change the face of the world and bring universal peace. But the Godhead of the Lord Jesus is a manifestation above and beyond this: It is God concentrating His moral qualities and "personalness," that which He is in Himself, in one unique, individual life-centre, who should so essentially know that He was a fully God-inhabited expression of the Universal Spirit, that He should be able to say, "I and the Creative

Spirit are one," "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father," "The Father in Me doeth the works." So, while God is Immanent in humanity on universal principles, common to all men, He is Incarnate in Christ Jesus in a sense so perfect, so complete, so exceptional, that of Jesus alone we can say, "God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, of one Substance with the Father." So Jesus is, in a sense no other human being ever has been, could be, or will be, "Immanuel, God with us," God taking flesh and dwelling among us.

The realization of this truth intensifies the mystic meaning of Paul's paradox as to the "weakness of God," for this specialization of God in one unique life-centre came with no demonstration of power to coerce into obedience human wills. It was characterized in every particular by "weakness." In an obscure corner of a remote province of the Roman Empire, two thousand years ago, a mysterious choir of angels chant a midnight anthem to a few watchers, and a little Child is found lying upon the bosom of a peasant maiden, and, at that supreme moment, is fulfilled the word of prophecy, "Unto us a

Child is born, unto us a Son is given ; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Everlasting Father, Mighty God, Prince of Peace."

We, who cannot define our own existence, who cannot analyse the life and perfume in a lily, to whom the tiny insect dancing in the sunbeam is an incomprehensible mystery, cannot state in terms of human understanding the precise manner in which " all the fulness of the God-head bodily " dwelt in the Babe of Bethlehem while at the same time God was everywhere ; but awakened spiritual consciousness knows it, without power to express it, and thousands of God-taught hearts blend their voices in every Eucharist in the words of the never-ceasing Gloria in Excelsis, " Thou only art holy, Thou only art the Lord, Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father."

It is a matter of history to trace out how the " weakness of God " has, down the ages, always been " stronger than men." The " weakness " of the principle incarnate in the Babe of Bethlehem has always quietly overpowered carnal mind, and while using it for the evolution of right against wrong, it

has conquered material force. When the Christ was born the greatest of world Empires was at the zenith of its power. The ideal of the Roman Empire was to rule the whole human race, to bind all nations together under one military despotism, and to enforce what Romans thought was the highest "culture" upon all countries and peoples. The Roman Empire believed itself to be the Master-piece of conceivable civilization. The Roman was the superman. *Civis Romanus sum* was the credential before which other men and nations bowed down. Into this unprecedented manifestation of world-wide military domination the little Child, the manifestation of the "weakness of God," the vehicle of the silent omnipotence of divine Principle, was born.

"He was in the world, and (as the Incarnation of the Logos) the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." Inasmuch as He represented the only real kingdom, "the Kingdom of Heaven within," He conquered, "not by might nor by power, but by His spirit," the whole military machinery of Rome and the majesty of the Cæsars. He used "might" and He used "power," but the

victory was by "His spirit." When the Emperor Julian, perishing on the battlefield before the standard of the Cross, cried out, "Galilean, Thou hast conquered," it was the confession of defeated material majesty to the truth underlying St Paul's mystic paradox, "The weakness of God is stronger than men."

"The weakness of God," the principle veiled in the Babe of Bethlehem, overcame, and always will overcome, the world. Not this beautiful material Cosmos, which some tell us is the result of human wrong thinking, this fair mirror of the Infinite Mind. That world was made by Him, and God dwells in every animal and in every flower as cosmic consciousness. The world that Jesus overcame was the mental world, the generally accepted false standard of the relation between God and man, and between man and his fellow-man, the fog darkening inward vision, the temper of materialism and the worship of power, the tradition that physical might was the only right, a tradition which down the ages has raised Empires by brute force to the climax of earthly power, from which they have always fallen. Thus were raised successively Egypt, Babylon, Rome, Greece.

The Principle incarnated in the Babe of Bethlehem, the slow, sure working of the apparent "weakness" of God, gave the death-blow to the tradition, and this Principle is working in Europe at this moment with certain victory for right as its goal.

"Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they
grind exceeding small;

Though with patience stands He waiting, with ex-
actness grinds He all."

Now this conviction of a hidden, irresistible will, so hidden that it is taken for "weakness," working as the power of evolution of ultimate good, is an assurance of Divine protection at this very critical period in our national history. It should keep the soul calm, tranquil, and patient, while the utmost efforts that self-sacrifice can suggest are made by all. As Isaiah says, "He that believeth shall not make haste." Though the earth is deluged with the best blood of Europe, though our own casualties in the war now amount to more than half a million men, there must be no demand for a premature peace.

We have read the German Chancellor's amazing outburst of prevarication and bombast, the only effect of which upon every

Briton worthy of the name will be to increase his determination to fight to the death against this bully of the world.

The amazing falsehood that "the present world-slaughter is continued to please England" will deceive no one outside the hoodwinked German nation. The inevitable inference from the Chancellor's speech is full of encouragement for the Allies. It is that Germany, by means of emissaries in neutral countries, is doing her utmost to initiate peace propaganda, a sure sign of a growing consciousness of not far distant exhaustion.

It would be treachery to posterity, and a sin against God, to make peace with a nation which by its wholesale disregard of the dignity and the rights of men, and its deliberately organized massacres and violations of women and children, has proclaimed its identity with the "Beast" of the Apocalypse. The only terms of peace to which the Allies can ever consent are expressed in Maeterlinck's phrase, "Never again." While the world's education remains on the material plane of evolution there can be no peace except it is won by war. Throughout all God's universe the normal law of evolution is war. Thus

does the butterfly win his gorgeous colours, the stag his powerful antlers ; thus does man win liberty and happiness and freedom from brutal, self-confident tyranny. Universal peace will only come when the truth foreshadowed by the Lord in the Sermon on the Mount becomes more than an ideal, the truth of the essential elemental oneness of humanity as an expression of God. The angels' anthem is not a lost chord, it is an unfulfilled chord because the conditions have not been carried out.

“ It seemed to link all perplexed meanings
 Into one perfect Peace,
And tremble away into silence
 As if it were loath to cease.
We have sought but we seek it vainly,
 That one lost chord divine.”

Let humanity fulfil the conditions and the lost chord will be found. In the most ancient and trustworthy MS., the Codex Vaticanus, the words are, “ Peace on earth to men of good-will.” “ Men of good-will ” are men who have realized their right relation to God and to their fellow-men ; this is the Lord’s ideal. Meanwhile the inexorable law for the education of the race, the law of the non-

interference of God between cause and consequence, turns the world into a hell ; but " the weakness of God," the hidden might of God is in the hell with us. I referred recently to that powerful parody of Browning, " God's in His hell, all's right with the world." So He is. The secret work of the All-Spirit, which looks like weakness, is the healing power in every hell, here or hereafter. God is within the souls of those who are in the hell of self-realization, and He is there to heal, bless and restore. Meanwhile the courage, self-sacrifice and patriotism of those who are giving their lives in striking at colossal wickedness, proclaim them to be God's valiant knights preparing the world to adopt the conditions of the angels' anthem.

The personal thought is this. The vast, silent, intangible Power is within me ; let me not consider it " the weakness of God," let me not actually weaken it by non-recognition, or thwart it by the selfish use of my human will. Let me remember, when tempted to pessimism as to my own progress, or as to the issues of this war, that God is always on what looks like the weaker side. Remember Lowell's lines :—

“He saw God stand upon the weaker side
That sank in seeming loss before its foes.
Therefore he went and joined himself to the
weaker part,
Fanatic named and fool, yet well content
So he could be nearer to God’s heart,
And feel its solemn pulses sending blood
Through all the widespread veins of endless good.”

Nearer to God’s heart. “Nearer my God to Thee, e’en though it be a cross (in my personal self, or in the Calvary of this war) that raiseth me, nearer my God to Thee, nearer to Thee.”

Help to lift others nearer to God’s heart. There are thousands of mothers, wives, widows, sisters, lovers, in Britain, France, Belgium, Russia, Germany, whose hearts are broken by this war. Realize, for yourself first, and then comfort others by helping them to realize, that the whole power of the Kingdom of Heaven, the “weakness of God” specialized in the man Christ Jesus, is working silently under these material conditions and agonizing experiences. Make a strong mental act of self-surrender to the silent power seemingly weak, but “closer than breathing, nearer than hands and feet,” and “stronger than men.” Speak to the Christ within you,

claim His power as the Principle ruling your life, the originator and purifier of your thoughts, the promoter and inspirer of your actions. Ask Him to purge your heart of all hate, and when you are praying for the thousands of broken hearts do not omit earnestly to pray for the broken hearts in Germany also. There is no inconsistency in praying for the Germans while fighting them to the death. The greatest surgeon I ever knew always prayed for his patient before he performed a critical operation causing pain and bloodshed. Believe in God and love humanity, though it may be your duty to shed blood and cause pain.

Mr Rhoades recently sent me that which he called

A TWO-FOLD TALISMAN.

“Wouldst draw down heaven
To hearts that grieve?
Believe and love,
Love and believe:
Wouldst lift thine own
All grief above?
Love and believe,
Believe and love!”

INTERCESSION DAY

JANUARY 2, 1916

“ Alleluia : for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.”
—REV. xix. 6.

LET it be recognized as an axiom that every human soul can know God, and ought to know God, for God Himself is at the bottom of every human soul. I suggest, therefore, to every human soul to adopt this mystic saying from the Apocalypse as the irrevocable affirmation for A.D. 1916, and mentally to register the determination to continue to affirm it whatever may happen on the material plane of life :—

“ All unknown the future lies,
 Let it rest ;
God who veils it from our eyes
 Knows best.
Ask not what shall be to-morrow ;
 Be content.
Take the cup of joy or sorrow
 God hath sent.”

If this New Year is to be a “ happy ” New Year, in the only true sense of the word happy, which is perfect rest of spirit independent of

circumstances and incidents, it can only be from our ability to recognize and affirm, without one shadow of doubt, that we are, all of us, individual forms in which the divine substance is coming into self-consciousness, and this essential oneness with the Infinite Divine Love confers a mental mastery over the temporary external conditions of life in the body, which will enable us to affirm, in all circumstances, "Our Father, Thine is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory for Ever and ever. Amen."

"Alleluia, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth." This affirmation represents the high-water mark of reasoned, earnest thinking into God, and expresses the assurance that God reigns and rules in everyone and everything. It is based on the statement in Isaiah, "I am God, there is none else." God is all, and all is God, and God is Love. Infinite space is filled with His Presence. God is the substance of all that is. As Swedenborg expresses it, God is the "Esse" of which visible human forms are the "existere," and, as Emerson says, "The doctrine of the Supreme Presence is always a cry of joy and exultation." I know that it requires mental effort

to make this affirmation your own, because our minds are full of inherited and acquired wrong thinking about God. God has been limited, stifled into propositions, concreted into dogmas. The keen, subtle minds of the early centuries of Christianity delighted in systematizing and defining God until He was conceived as an external Omnipotent Sovereign located somewhere in space, from whence He reigned over a universe outside of and apart from Himself, and was open to solicitation, if certain conditions suggested by the Christian revelation were complied with, to interfere with His own law of Government. This Objective Deism has made many Atheists. If God was ruling the world from outside, occasionally interfering with the play of forces which He originally set in motion, it was seen to be impossible to screen Him from the imputation of caprice, favouritism and bad government. The thoughtful people of the East were the first to recognize that the solution of the problem lay in discovering the true relation of individual man to the Creative Essence within him, and St Paul again and again teaches us that the solution is only to be discovered by clear thinking. He says,

“ Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” In other words, do not be mentally absorbed by the material environment of this world ; you have your duty to do in it, but let the material come second. Change your mode of thinking. Emancipate yourself from the domination of the senses and your belief in the sterile limitation of Deism ; teach yourself to realize the Allness and the nearness of God ; fill your mind with the conviction that there is but one animating Principle, one Love, pulsing through all things. The fearless logic of a clear-thinking mind, rising out of preconceived limitations, will lead you to the conviction that God is the All-pervading Spirit, surrounding and inter-penetrating all worlds and all existences, and that the originating movement of the Infinite Intelligence imaging itself in human life-centres, is so perfect in wisdom that He could never err, never follow the line of least good, never have to remake, or repair, a scheme that some other power had upset. Therefore, “ In reason’s spite whatever is is right,” and the greatest problems in this visible Universe must have been in the womb of the Universal Mind before worlds were. If the

training of the human race has involved the painful experience of that which we call evil, still God and Man are elementally inseverable ; the illimitable Soul is evolving and ruling in the very centre of all things. He travails within the souls and bodies of the individuals in which He is expressing Himself, and, from within, from the Kingdom of Heaven within, where He reigneth, He is gradually uplifting the whole of humanity. His purpose is sure, His resources are limitless, His wisdom is perfect, His love is unending ; and when I know it, when, as Paul says, I am " transformed by the renewing of my mind," when I have thought myself out of limitations, I can look upwards and inwards and outwards, for there is no place where He is not, and wherever He is He is Love, and, in the darkest experiences of life, even through blinding tears, I can confidently cry, " Alleluia, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth."

I love to quote from that remarkable fragment, the " Logia Ieesou," discovered in Egypt in 1904. It is older than any MS. of the New Testament, and in all probability is a genuine saying of our Lord : " Let not him who seeks the Father cease until he find

Him, and having found Him he will be amazed, and being amazed he shall reign, and reigning shall rest." It is a curiously accurate diagnosis of the mental stages of a true realization of God. When this conviction of the Immanence, the Allness, of "the Lord God Omnipotent" first awakens within you; when you realize for the first time that you are one of the myriad agencies through whom the Infinite Mind is working out His purpose, and that God positively wants you, that you are as necessary to God as God is to you, you are "amazed," amazed at the splendour of the truth, amazed at the disappearance of all problems and difficulties. Extra-cosmic Deism fades away, for your mind is functioning from another plane, and God feels very near to you, "closer than breathing and nearer than hands or feet." Next you "reign" over the conditions of your material existence, over your body and its claims, over temptation and fear, for your life is proceeding from an entirely fresh basis, from the divine element within you. And thirdly you "rest"; you "rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him," because you know that God is reigning and that the perplexity around you has no

essential permanent reality, but is a necessary and inevitable experience of this dream-world. You rest because you know that in God you "live and move and have your being," and that behind all second causes there is ever working a divine purpose that makes for perfection, and that you may, with confidence, utter your affirmation, "Alleluia, the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth."

When we know that God is not an external Monarch to be placated, nor a transcendentalized chief commissioner to be called into action to stop wars, but a Presence to be found, loved, and co-operated with, the attitude of mind in which we face the dark side of human life will be the attitude of common sense, that is, the sense common to those who know that, in the inmost, the whole Kingdom of Heaven is on their side, and whose minds are functioning from the plane of spiritual consciousness.

We shall no longer mentally confuse the "reign" of the "Power that worketh in us" with an external personal despotism. We shall see that God's "reign" is a hidden process of stimulating an inward capacity, not a process of coercive compulsion from without.

The Lord God Omnipotent "reigneth" by Love alone. It is the very perfection of this love that allows us to suffer when we misuse our wills. He seeks to realize Himself as love in us, and as love cannot be mechanical, He must give us sufficient will-power to thwart and postpone His divine purpose. The use of will-power for personal gain is the cause of the trouble and unrest and bloodshed on the earth. The non-interference of God with His own law that consequences must follow causes is the only system of education through which human souls can ultimately emerge as moral beings capable of entering into their glorious inheritance. A moral being is a being who has recognized evil and learned by experience to put it under his feet. Potential perfection is in every man because God is in every man, but man can only come to consciousness of this deeply hidden perfection through the experience of imperfection, and the consequences which follow the misuse of will. Therefore I plead for God that He should be understood, trusted and loved. He is seeking to find His own Individualization in every separate member of the human race. And when we use our wills to resist

Him we grieve the heart of God. The Immanent self-expressing Spirit feels when even a sparrow dies, and shares to the uttermost in the suffering inseparable from His method of reigning. Belief in the endless changelessness of His love working within all things, slowly evolving the glorious end that He has preordained, will give you perfect mental quietude in the midst of the perplexing facts of life, and enable you triumphantly to raise your voice in the affirmation, "Alleluia, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth."

Now if we have thus found our place in the cosmic order, we are bound to be distributors of the truth that is within ourselves, and it is well to apply that truth to the special subject of to-day.

It is a helpful suggestion of the leaders of all the Churches that the whole nation, on this first Sunday of a New Year, should, with calmness and hope, seek close communion with the "Lord God Omnipotent who reigneth." A nation, whose external expressions of religion are widely divergent, entirely at one in prayer for a common object, is a valuable manifestation of essential unity, and will assuredly generate dynamic force in the spirit sphere. Certain pre-requisite mental

conditions, however, suggest themselves to those who know their place in the cosmic order. First, in spite of our unparalleled sacrifices, there must be no shadow of discouragement, pessimism, or fear as to the issue of this fight for right. We are engaged in a deadly war, not for gain, but for the liberty of Europe; we are on the side of God. You remember what Abraham Lincoln said when one asked him if he was sure that God was on their side. He replied, "What I want to be sure of is that we are on the side of God." We are on the side of God, and our mental attitude should be one of thanksgiving to-day. The nerve of our national strength is unshaken. We possess absolute and unparalleled supremacy at sea. No mortal blow has been dealt to the Allies. Through the year 1915, Great Britain, though she has made no advance, has been steadily increasing her resources, naval, military, aerial, in men and munitions. The "contemptible little army" will soon amount to four millions. Within the next few months we shall be able to supply not only ourselves but our allies with vast supplies of high explosives. Meanwhile Russia is training millions of men, and equipment and munitions are pouring into

that country from Japan, and the Italian artillery is the finest in Europe. Let there be no pessimism. Secondly, in our united approach to "the Lord God Omnipotent" there must be no cringing humiliation. I often quote, in these days, Queen Victoria's reply when Lord Aberdeen arranged a day of public humiliation during the Crimean War. The Queen wrote, "To say that the great sinfulness of the nation has brought about this war, when it is the selfishness, and want of honesty, of one man and his servants, while our conduct throughout has been actuated by unselfishness and honesty, would be a mere bit of hypocrisy." The conditions are precisely similar. We were forced into this war by the mad ambition of one man, and Britain, though utterly unprepared, faced the greatest military power the world has ever known with a courage, an unselfishness, a resignation in bereavement, for which we can only bless and thank God. We confess that we have our grave national sins, we do not pose as a community of Puritan perfectionists; but we know that we are right, we know that, without dishonour before God and man, we could not have kept out of this war; we know that we are fighting against

the greatest concentration of bestiality, cruelty, lying and materialism that has ever disgraced humanity ; it is therefore with perfect confidence that we may to-day approach " the Lord God Omnipotent " who reigneth, and say, in the authorized words of our Prayer Book, " Save and deliver us from the hands of our enemies ; abate their pride, assuage their malice and confound their devices ; that we, being armed with Thy defence, may be preserved from all perils, to glorify Thee, who art the only Giver of all victory." Thirdly, it is of the utmost importance that we, who understand how the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth, should realize that prayer, such as is to-day suggested to the nation, is both delusive and demoralizing unless we are prepared to make every sacrifice in all departments of national life. It is both futile and irreverent to pray to God to do for us what He desires to do through us. The psalmist says, " Nations compass me round about, but in the Name of the Lord will I destroy them." Remember the message to Israel of old in the greatest crisis of their national history : " God said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto Me, speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward." God helps

those who help themselves, because it is through themselves that He gives the help. That is how "He reigneth." We can almost imagine a whispered echo of that message coming to-day to the leaders of the various Churches of this country saying, "Wherefore criest thou unto Me, speak to the men of the British Empire that they go forward." No words can sufficiently express our admiration of the thousands who have gone forward, and are going forward, and who have sacrificed their all for their country. Think of those glorious heroes who, whether they know it or not, have, by giving their lives for others, identified themselves with the Christ. You mourners who are weeping for your dear ones dry your eyes and be proud of them, thank God for them, try and live so as to be worthy of them, they are waiting for you and expecting you in the other world ; remember you have now got a son, a brother, a husband, a lover, in the high sphere of spirit, "mentioned in despatches" by the Archangels, and decorated with the "Calvary Cross." I love those words of Whittier :—

"Wherever through the ages rise
The altars of self-sacrifice,
Where love its arms hath opened wide,

Or man for man has calmly died ;
I see the same white wings outspread
That hovered o'er the Master's Head."

But the question is, are we, as a nation, "going forward" whole-heartedly, unitedly, with all political predilection obliterated, with sufficient determination and self-sacrifice to justify this "crying unto the Lord" to-day ? Of the 600,000 single men who, we are told, have not attested under Lord Derby's scheme, many doubtless are ineligible, many are engaged in absolutely necessary industries, and, in not a few cases, only one son is left at home as bread-winner in a family from which the rest of the men have gone to the war. But that still leaves a vast residuum of unused power, and, if the touching appeal of the King, "More men are wanted to keep my armies in the field, I ask you to come forward voluntarily and take your share in the fight," has failed ; if the appeal from our heroes in the trenches, and at the different fighting fronts, has failed ; if the foul murder of Nurse Edith Cavell has not succeeded in arousing the chivalry of the young men of the nation, the voluntary system, of which we have been justifiably proud, has finally broken down. One alternative alone remains if Britain is

to fulfil her sacred obligations to the Allies, and save herself from dishonour, and possibly from destruction. It is positively irreverent to approach the "Lord God Omnipotent" with petitions to save England from the crushing miseries inflicted on Belgium and Servia and Armenia until we have fearlessly, without a moment's hesitation, adopted universal National Service as the law of the land. If Britain is really in earnest about winning this war it ought to be possible to do this without breaking the unity of the Nation, but, at whatever cost, it must be done. If we are not prepared to fight the Germans with our whole national strength we can only expect to our intercessions to-day the historic answer, "Wherfore criest thou unto Me, speak to the British Nation, to the children of Israel, that they go forward."

Now if this congregation is to be one of the electrodes in generating the dynamic force which we are to expect as the result of the intercessions of to-day, it is obvious that each one must apply the affirmation "the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth" first to his personal self. I must realize that it is myself that I must dedicate to the Service of God to-day. I must realize that, as the Kingdom

of Heaven is within me, the "Lord God Omnipotent reigneth" as the spirit of evolution within myself, without coercing my will. I must realize that I am an individualization of the Infinite Life-Spirit in whom Divine Love functions and desires to reign. I must find, consciously, this living Presence. I must "be still and know that He is God," and, in conscious union with Him, I must summon before the bar of His Judgment my thoughts, desires, actions, ambitions, and ask Him to reign over them. Are we ready to do this? Can we ask Him to look searchingly into the details of our several lives and crush our selfishness? If so we are ready to intercede, and we must next realize that "the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth" as the driving power behind evolution, fighting against evil in humanity at large, and that if I cannot fight on the material plane, I can "come to the help of the Lord against the mighty" by intense, believing, mental concentration on the spiritual plane. Intercession is the finite soul in communion with the Infinite soul with some special need or desire held intensely in the mind. Intercession is a determination of the whole mind and heart towards some desired end, which determination of the human

mind and heart instantly attracts the ever-watchful, ever-loving Infinite Spirit, drawing Him to function in the direction of that determination. When God hears and answers intercessions, it is not the good-natured intervention of an objective Omnipotent Monarch, it is the responsiveness of the Infinite Spirit in His highest degree, His universal degree, to the need of the lower and differentiated degrees of Himself. That may sound puzzling, but Divine Love is always watchfully around us all, as we are differentiated spirits which are part of Himself, and He is longing for us to need Him, and open to Him. The appeal of God outside you to the divine nature within you, is, "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it." "Son, all that I have is thine." "Delight thou in the Lord and He shall give thee thy heart's desire." When you know that there is only one life, and that God and His children, that is, Infinite Spirit and the individual forms in which He realizes Himself, live that life together, and act and react upon one another, your communion with God becomes real, simple, direct, like communion with your closest friend, and prayer is as natural to you as breathing. Now, suppose that I, on this day of National Intercession,

desire a special blessing on a cause, a nation, or an individual. I first mentally realize my oneness with the Infinite Spirit. In that mental realization I must include the cause or the individual for whom I desire blessing. If I am alone, and not leading the prayers of others, I only say the name of the cause or the person. St Paul calls this "making mention of him in his prayers," and it is well to avoid, in private prayer, all suggestion as to methods or details. This blending of the mind with the universal mind while mentally holding a desire into the Presence, passes, full of the Infinite resources of God, directly to the object for which you are praying, and, as one Infinite life fills the Universe, it is frequently actually felt by those for whom you are praying, no matter what distance separates you. I told you recently of one, on a battleship in Suvla Bay, whose name is on your list, and of his strong consciousness of your prayers. Last week there came a delayed letter from an officer who has been fighting in Gallipoli, and whose name is also on your list. He says, "We were sent to restore a position taken by the Turks, and we were eleven hours under the most awful and terrific fire. I felt so comforted at the thought of the prayers at St

John's. It is the greatest source of help and strength to me." I cannot put into a definition how the real faith and receptivity of individual minds focuses and influences the universal mind. I know that it does. I know that it calls into activity spirit influences which would not thus be called into activity without the intercession. It is obviously as much a part of God's regularized working as wireless telegraphy.

Now imagine the dynamic force of several million believing hearts in London to-day, on this basis of realization of the inseverability of God and man, with desire, will, and imagination intensely concentrated in one direction, the direction of victory for the Allies in this war, holding into the Presence of Divine Love our Empire, our statesmen, our soldiers, our sailors, our airmen, the splendid service of the Red Cross, and the Order of St John of Jerusalem, for which your generous contributions are now asked.

May we not confidently expect that the result will be so glorious that the whole Empire, and even those who are now our deadly enemies, will recognize the Eternal truth of the affirmation : " Alleluia, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth."

CHRISTMAS FROM GOD'S POINT OF VIEW

" What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it ? wherefore then, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes ? "—ISAIAH v. 4.

TRY to look at Christmas from God's point of view, just as a tiny drop in the Atlantic might be imagined looking at things from the ocean's point of view. We can do this, for God is Infinite Mind, and we humans are differentiated minds. We men are disappointing God, we are making God unhappy, we are grieving the Spirit, and the words I have quoted are a sign of the divine distress expressed in language by His greatest prophet. Does it shock you to be told that you can grieve God ? God greatly loves you, and it is only those whom you greatly love who can grieve you. God is grieved by being misunderstood, sublimated away by some into an intangible myth, cramped by others into the limitations of an extra-cosmic Person abiding in a distant heaven, a spectator of the miseries of a creation which He is apparently

too impotent or too indifferent to help. Obviously the finite mind cannot understand God, but it can avoid misunderstanding Him. If you misunderstand God you will never be able to "delight in the Lord." When Infinite Mind first spoke to the possibilities of His inmost being the creative words "Let there be," and everything came forth from the womb of His mind as a mother brings forth her children, He spoke the creative words with a sigh, for He knew the shadow that must fall upon the highest specimen of His fair creation from the rebellion of human wills, which wills were an absolutely necessary factor in the training of moral beings. God Himself could not make a man moral without giving him a will. He knew that, as the soul of the universe, He would travail in pain in the limitations of creation and in the souls and bodies of men, but His purpose was so perfect, its end so certain, the glory that shall be revealed so transcendent, that, as the central life of the universe, God was willing to endure the Cross, because of the certainty that "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed." And yet millions do misunderstand God. It is this

misunderstanding of God that is at the root of the constant complaints of the religious pessimists. "Where is God in all this bloodshed and horror?" men ask. "Why does not God interfere to stop the war? is not Christianity an utter failure? it is no use praying to God," and so on. Now this mental attitude is not unbelief, it is belief of a wrong kind. It is a repetition of the cry of the prophet Habakkuk, "O Lord, how long shall I cry and Thou wilt not hear, cry unto Thee of violence, and Thou wilt not save?" The religious belief of millions, who profess and call themselves Christians, has not yet reached even to the verge of the discovery of its right relation to God. It is still in the infant stage of spiritual understanding. It is still persistently crying to an outside force for world changes which can only come from an interior power. The chief problem of life consists in recognizing the true relation of each individual to the Spirit, who is realizing Himself within that individual. God, Infinite Mind, is Power and Life within each one of us, and it is from within that all reforms come, whether individual, national, or universal. At the same time it is gloriously true that God is also the Spirit of Divine Love outside the

individuals in which He is realizing Himself. To know God outside you is joy and peace unspeakable. When you have learnt mentally to realize, focus, and concentrate upon the Universal Presence, and know that it is actually in the room with you, you can pray to Him, literally talk to Him, you can "delight in the Lord" as Omnipresent Individuality with all the qualities of Personalness, and He will love to "give you your heart's desire." No belief in Immanence can rob you of Transcendence. But the Almighty method by which our lives are guided and developed; the active, practical, educating principle by obedience to which we become virtually the framers of our own character, is the Power within each one of us, that which the Christ called "the Kingdom of Heaven within you." As Judge Troward has so brilliantly elucidated in his various books, Spirit desires to realize in individual forms His highest quality, which is Love. As Love is the only quality which cannot be mechanical, the individual in whom Spirit would realize Himself as love must have liberty to withhold co-operation if he pleases. The distinction between man as a vehicle for God's self-realization and the cosmic vehicles, such as the solar system, the lily, and the

bird, is just this ; we men have a freedom not given to the solar system, the lily, and the bird, of withholding our co-operation, and grieving and thwarting the Spirit, by using our freedom in self-gratification. The abuse of this freedom of action, this human will, is the origin of this war with its miseries, and religious souls, who have not in the least realized the true relation of individual lives to the Infinite Spirit, are crying to God to stop these disasters and sanguinary conflicts. They are expecting God to do for them from without that which He can only do through them from within. God is the Inspirer, the Friend, the lover of all human souls, but He is not the compeller of human wills. If He compelled a single human will, that human being would at once become an automaton, and that would thwart God's original purpose, and nullify God's self-realization. Therefore, to express it quite plainly, God, without the co-operation of man, cannot stop the war. "Peace on earth" is for "men of good-will." God, together with "men of good-will," could stop all wars, and that will be when men are willing to be used as instruments for effecting what God designs, instead of trying to use God as an instrument for effecting what they

design. When we sing our verse in the National Anthem :—

“Lord, let war’s tempest cease,
Fold the whole world in peace
Under Thy Wings.
Make all the nations one,
All hearts beneath the sun,
Till Thou shalt reign alone,
Great King of Kings,”

His answer can only be, “I am striving to work out, through you, My own ideas and not yours. I am not ruling the universe from outside, but I am the central, self-evolving life in all. I am suffering in and with My universe ; you men are grieving Me by not allowing Me to realize Myself in My Highest qualities in your individual lives.” There is no irreverence and no exaggeration in the words of that striking poem by Mrs Cheyne which I have quoted in one of my war sermons. It is called

“THE UNIVERSAL GOD SPEAKS IN WAR-TIME.”
“Man, O man, I pray you, forsake your tribal god,
and worship only Me,
For I am your everlasting Redeemer.
As you have need of Me, so I have need of you :
Therefore, man, O man, have mercy upon Me !
Though I am deathless, I am not immune to pain ;
And every evil that is done upon earth hurts Me ;
Every shot that is fired passes through Me ;
The wound of every man wounded is My wound ;

Every cruelty that is perpetrated is perpetrated
upon Me ;
All the blood that is shed is My blood ;
When the earth is defiled with slaughter
My garden is laid waste.
Man, O man, have mercy upon Me !"

This poem is, perhaps, an extreme example of trying to see things from God's point of view, but, logically, it is true. Divine Love is, by His Immanent Spirit, gradually, secretly influencing human hearts, leading them to submit to the law of final order. If this were not so the world would be a perfect hell. He is producing, ceaselessly, without compulsion, "men of good-will," grand and beautiful characters. As the generations succeed one another there is a steady, growing illumination of human hearts and minds. Though war has never been waged with such reckless ferocity, such horrible depravity ; though the world has never witnessed before such outrages as those perpetrated by the Germans in Belgium, France, Russia, Serbia, and, worst of all, in Armenia, where nearly a million have been massacred, still there is far more good in the world at this moment than evil, more love than hate. Evil is noisy, self-advertizing, brutal ; good is secret, silent, self-suppressing. There are tens of thousands of homes in all

the warring nations where love abides in the sacred shrine in the very midst of the "Gott strafe" babel of maddened combatants. Never, in the world's history, has there been more love, self-forgetfulness, tenderness, courage, than that which, from the first, has been shown by nurses, doctors, orderlies, and societies like the Y.M.C.A. and others, during this hideous war. While the cause of God and man seems to be torn to shreds between raging combatants, while hate has been officially propagated, taught in German schools, and voiced in German hymns, God, as a gifted American said, "has been taking the innumerable discordant and fevered vibrations of poor, ignorant, misguided human hearts out into the cool, restful spaces of His Being, and there has let them slowly sob themselves to rest in His bosom." This God is doing, not by compulsion from without, but by influence from within.

But the Spirit is grieved, the Soul of the world is saddened, and we recognize in that saying of Isaiah the sigh of God: "What more could I have done to my vineyard; two thousand years have passed since I revealed, to all who had eyes to see, the golden key which unlocks the problem of the ages. When will the hearts of men understand that I am loving them

with an everlasting love ; when will they understand that God and man must act together to bring to its fulfilment the prayer of Jesus, ' Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven ' ? "

In the language of Scripture the " Vineyard " always means the inmost life of intelligent humanity, and God says I have come out of the Eternal Silence, I have come forth from universally diffused Immanence, I have made Myself thinkable, personal. As the soul of the Universe I have always shared men's sorrows, endured men's sufferings, borne men's burdens, and some of the wisest of the Eastern thinkers knew it ; but now, that all may know it, and realize it, I have come out from the mystic centre called Heaven and become Incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and I have been made Man. What more could have been done unto My vineyard that I have not done unto it ? Wherefore then, O Sons of Men, when I looked that ye should bring forth fruits of purified character, of peace between nations, of illuminated life, wherefore have ye brought forth only the wild grapes of combatant, animal man ?

The answer is that the true meaning of the Incarnation of God in one special life-centre has not been realized.

It is not altogether our fault. The critical intelligence of schoolmen and metaphysicians, very early in Christian times, set to work to analyse and define into dogmatic propositions, and limit into "plans of salvation," the eternal reality of the Incarnation, until it became more a creed to believe than a life to live. The Neoplatonists would have been content to say that God, as Infinite Mind, is immanent and omnipresent, but, to be a life-controlling Power, He must be conceived as Personal, as our finite human minds conceive a person. Therefore in love, in self-sacrifice, He came, as it were, out of immanence and omnipresence and presented Himself in a human body inwardly divine, outwardly human, that men might misunderstand Him no more.

Nothing was taken from Infinite Immanence, or added to it, when God became incarnate in Jesus. He concentrated into visibility that which He always was from Eternity to Eternity, that men might recognize His Nature and His Character and understand Him.

"Space and time, O Lord, that show Thee
Oft in power veiling good,
Are too vast for us to know Thee
As our trembling spirits would,
But in Jesus, yes in Jesus,
Father, Thou art understood."

That is the eternal reality of the Incarnation. God became man in Jesus that men, who with spirit-taught eyes saw Him, might know how to think Personality of the Universal Soul while preserving the thought of His universality, and might analyse and study the character of their God. If you look at Christmas from God's point of view you will allow that He could not have done more for His vineyard, humanity, than that which He has done ; He could not have done more to draw all men unto Him.

The personal thought obviously is, "Has He drawn me ?" Do I apprehend the Incarnation of God in Jesus on the plane of spiritual consciousness ? For two thousand years the teaching spirit has been "taking of the things of the Christ and showing them unto men," and of that accumulated teaching we are the inheritors, we ought not to be bringing forth wild grapes. Let me be quite sure where I mentally stand ? Am I content with an unintelligent acquiescence in certain dogmas and creed definitions, and an external conformity to Christian doctrine, without recognizing the wonderful Love of the Infinite Mind in coming to seek me in human form. Or have I perhaps ceased to be a Deist but

lost myself in the vastness of Infinite Mind, so that all personalness in God is sublimated away into a vague abstraction? Or has the cradle at Bethlehem cleared away the clouds? By seeing how God is Incarnate in Jesus do I now know how God is Immanent in every man; can I now, in Jesus, think Infinite Mind as personal, and humanity as divine? If so, I can with my whole soul "delight in the Lord" and trust Him, however dark my lot, knowing that if I cast all my care upon Him He will "give me my heart's desire."

This is a time of unprecedented sorrow. If our own hearts are not broken, the burden of the sorrows of others is casting a heavy shadow, but God understood; "God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself," not Himself to the world, is the antidote to heartache. God cares, God feels, God pities, God suffers, God knows, God educates, for God is Jesus and Jesus is God, and He is in everything that happens to us.

"O Soul! look upward, trusting, kiss the rod,
And know there is no 'might have been' with God.
From Him, when meek and lowly we draw near,
We learn of love that casteth out all fear.
We find a faith that in oblivion's sea
Whelms every dread and doubt eternally."

My personal thought at Christmastide is

this. The Divine-human-wonder born on Christmas Day is the Mediator between God and man, because in Him God and man interblend as in no other manifestation, and, inasmuch as we men are individual mirrors of the Incarnation, as the million dewdrops individually mirror the sun, I claim identity with the Child-Christ according to His own words, "I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in Us," and that means an affirmation of my Divine Nature. I will strive to live my daily life in the light of this knowledge. I will hold my conscious mind to that thought, and, as it becomes more and more my normal attitude, I know I shall experience a gradually expanding power of realization, and, though I may be a very weak plant in my Father's vineyard from the flesh point of view, and need much pruning, there will be no more "wild grapes" of the natural man.

Then, secondly, I will force myself to realize the fact that this identity with God Incarnate, this reflecting by each individual of the inseverability of God and man, is universal, and I will remember that God, who was specialized in Jesus, is Immanent, not in a selected few, but in humanity; that He is cradled in the

race as Infinite Mind differentiated, as He was cradled in Bethlehem as Infinite Mind specialized. This will help me to turn justifiable indignation into a yearning for brotherhood when we think of our enemies.

The immanence of God is the monopoly of no age, no nation, no Church, no religion. In the profound inmost of things there are no barriers separating nation from nation. The bestial cruelties, the overwhelming ambitions, the blasphemous assumptions of certain nations are outrages on the material plane of human life, and on that plane they must be crushed by might and by power. I thank God that the Allies are fighting to the death for all that makes civilization possible. Many more of our loved ones must give their human lives before this powerful Antichrist is vanquished, as most assuredly he will be. But I will ever remember that we Britons are making ready the way of the Lord, preparing God's world for the dawn of the new day. We are fighting as God's instruments in freeing the world from hideous wrong, we are cutting out the deadly cancer of atheistic materialism which hinders the awakening of spiritual consciousness. As we are doing it for God, there must be no hate, there must be con-

scientious self-restraint, even in our thoughts, never forgetting that God's ideal is peace on earth from the recognition of divine immanence as the one basal principle of unity. For that we non-combatants should pray during this Christmastide. This it is to be of the number of the "men of good-will," the predominance of whom can alone bring "Peace on earth," and thus, mentally at any rate, by our aspirations and prayers and affirmations, we shall be hastening the time:—

"When the war drum throbs no longer
And the battle flag is furled,
In the Parliament of man,
The Federation of the world."

THE CURE FOR DEPRESSION

"Walk in the Spirit."—GAL. v. 16.

THE Apostle who gave us this infallible prescription against despondency was an expert, inasmuch as it was given to him to be the medium of the revelation of the mystic Christ. We need that prescription now. All hearts are aching, either from personal bereavement or from the keen pain of sharing the sorrows of others. The list of casualties darkens many English homes. Our brave troops are there "in jeopardy every hour," and most of us read in that "Roll of Honour" the name of some one whom we know and care for. The unspeakable mental pressure of this time of national and personal anxiety must plunge into deepest depression all who have nothing to uplift them beyond the utter impotence of a shallow optimism. The secret of peace, that "peace that passeth all understanding," that peace that obliterates fear and doubt, lies in that one sentence of St Paul, "Walk in the Spirit." Consider with me what it is to "walk in the Spirit." To

“ walk in the Spirit ” is an acquired habit of realization of the Presence of God. It is mentally living on the plane of Spirit, while you do your duty on the plane of the material. It is being filled with the irrefragable assurance that the only real, the only permanent, is the spiritual. “ Walking in the Spirit ” does not imply the absurd denial of the existence of the material. The material is a gift of God ; the material enters largely into human responsibility ; the material has its joys, its sorrows and its duties ; but the material is transitory, it is a passing, educative experience, and the real man is antecedent to the material, will survive it, and is wholly independent of it. To “ walk in the Spirit ” is to live in conscious vital realization of your essential elemental oneness with the Infinite Life. What is our justification for compelling our mind to discover and abide in this realization ? Clear, logical thinking leads you to the absolute conviction that Infinite Spirit is the only real Power, and that you, individually, are one with that Power.

This is how the thought works out. No one who is not a candidate for an asylum now believes in the self-existence of the universe. The origin of all things is Infinite Mind in self-expression, God in self-realization,

Spirit assuming form. This is what St John calls the Word, what we call the Christ; not another God, but the utterance of the one God, as my voice is the utterance of my thought: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God." In other language, God has always been the Self-utterer, the Self-realizer, and His self-realization has always been the Word, or, as we call it now, the Christ.

When, therefore, God would make worlds, His primal creative act is the clothing of His Word, His thought of Himself, in matter. "Through every grass blade," says Carlyle, "the glory of the present God still beams." "Thus," says Goethe in "Faust," "at the roaring loom of time I ply and weave for God the garments that thou seest Him by." Earth, sky, stars, clouds, mountains, valleys, rivers, seas, flowers, fruits are garments of "God in self-realization," and God in self-realization is the "Word" known to us now as the Christ.

Again, when the All-Father would realize Himself in human sons, in other words, when He made man in His own image, it is the Word, the Logos, what we now know as the Christ, that becomes the central life in every man born into the world; "without Him," *i.e.* apart from the Logos, "was not anything

made that was made." Take man in any age, track him to the centre of his being, analyse him back to his deepest self, and there lies hidden a ray of the Creator's life, which is the Word, the Logos, what we now know as the Christ, the "light that lighteth every man coming into the world"; and when a man sins against his highest, violates his conscience, smothers himself in his lowest, quenches the Divine principle, it is a literal fact, be he Hindoo, Mussulman, or Christian, that he is sinning against the Christ, though he knows Him not under that Name.

So the Eternal reality unfolded in St Paul's words in this morning's Epistle is this: The substance of all is Spirit; the visible universe is Spirit, the Creative Mind made matter. Humanity is Spirit, the Creative Mind made flesh, and therefore the deepest inmost in man is the self-realization of God the Spirit, and every human being is part of God's consciousness, and this is what St Paul meant when He spoke of "the mystery hid from the foundation of the world, Christ in you the hope of glory."

Hid from the foundation of the world, till manifested in Bethlehem's cradle; only dimly perceived till it was specialized in the Lord

Jesus. In the fulness of time this universally diffused individuality of the Father Spirit was concentrated into one separate human enclosure, into one spotless, perfect human life, called Jesus of Nazareth ; "The Word," the universally distributed creative mind, "became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory full of grace and truth." "Come unto Me," "Come unto Me," is His first invitation. "I came out from the Father and am come into the world," He says, "that I may teach you by My life, My words, My actions, that the central fact of human life is conscious union with the Father ; that to overcome the world is to live, mentally, so intensely in the spiritual, that the material is of no real moment to you." Then when you have thus come to the Historic Christ, He expands your mind, He leads you from the particular to the universal ; He identifies His life with yours ; He teaches you that "as He is so are you in this world" ; He leads you to see that He is the manifestation in perfection of a universal truth ; that the full-orbed divinity in Him is germinal in you ; that, as the Historic Christ, He is the manifestation of the universal self-expression of the Infinite Spirit, and the universal self-expression of the

Infinite Spirit is the mystic Christ in all men, and as this truth of the indwelling of the consciousness of the Father in all men becomes clearer to you, you know that you individually are part of the Infinite life, and you say, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

This is the meaning of this morning's Epistle, and, though our realization of it is necessarily gradual, it is unalterably, eternally true.

See, then, how this revelation of the hidden divinity in humanity banishes pessimism, how it encourages an inextinguishable assurance for earth's weary wanderers. He who realizes the truth of the immanence or indwelling of the Word, or Logos, or mystic Christ in man, even in the remotest degree ; who believes, even dimly, that his real life is "hid with Christ in God," will never despair of himself. When you are tempted to be despondent and doubting, and the heavens feel like brass, and the evil around you threatens, never dwell on material phenomena, "sursum corda," lift up your heart, spiritualize your thinking. You know that you are not always thus ; there are higher thoughts that sometimes flash across your soul, there are tenderer emotions, nobler instincts ; think of them, rally back to your highest moments,

they are the guarantee of your divine sonship. "It hath pleased God," said St Paul, "to reveal His Son in me." The sonship must have been there always, even when Paul was a persecuting bigot, and was murdering Stephen, or it could never have been revealed. So is it in you; pray to the Father "reveal Thy Son in me," which is another way of praying reveal the mystic Christ in me. Then work with the prayer, mortify temper, inhibit wrong thinking, force your mind to rise out of the fog. Say to yourself, "I am a 'Christopher,' a Christ-bearer, I will never despair of myself, all the resources of the Kingdom of Heaven are within me."

Again, never despair of others. Believing as I believe, I care not how my sensibilities may be revolted by the enormities, the foulnesses with which I am brought in contact; I will fight with hot indignation against abominable wickedness, but I will never despair of anyone; the Divine is there, though now hidden and blasphemed. It may not be given to me to find the hidden Christ of God in some other human soul, but it is there. God will reveal His Son, the mystic Christ, in every one. Sometimes some sudden shock, some exceptional crisis, will break the crust of

materialism, and the bondage of the lower self, and the unsuspected divinity within will shine forth. I remember, forty-six years ago, a remarkable illustration of this truth. The superficiality which is characteristic of English irreligious respectability, the timidity of the Church in striking at public vice, the apparent determination of our legislators never to face facts, has permitted to exist in London, the centre of modern civilization, a class of women compelled to exist under conditions of disgraceful enslavement, haunting the streets like vampires :—

“ Pleading, cursing, dreading to die,
Selling the soul to whoever will buy,
Dealing in shame for a morsel of bread,
Hating the living, and fearing the dead.”

Degradation knows no lower depths. I can imagine no lips which could more appropriately speak Moore’s terrible words in the poem of “Lalla Rookh” :—

“ See here, if Hell, with all its power to damn,
Can add one curse to the foul thing I am.”

And yet during the terrible cholera epidemic of 1869, when many fled from fear, when nurses were unattainable, when the dead lay uncoffined, these victims of the moral rottenness of society gathered round the Clergy, who remained at their posts, and, fearless of in-

fection, forgetful of self, regenerated by the inspiration of pity, ministered and laboured incessantly in the midst of the raging plague. "But for them," said one (it was Mr Green, the historian), "our work would have been impossible." This awakening of the deeply-hidden divinity in human souls was a convincing justification of Wordsworth's unmoved confidence, when he said :—

"Neither vice nor guilt,
Debasement undergone by body or by mind,
Not all the misery forced upon my sight
Could overthrow my trust
In what man may become."

Deep within these harlots of the streets, shining still beneath the degradation, was the Divine spark. The lost coin of the King, though disfigured by the mire of earth, bore yet the image and superscription of the God in whom they "lived and moved and had their being."

This awakening of the soul, which is the stirring of the mystic Christ, both in nations and individuals, is undoubtedly discoverable under the crushing catastrophe of this terrible war. A suggestion has been made by an American divine that the result of this war will be a great abandonment of belief in God, and the question is being exploited in some

of our English newspapers. There will be an abandonment of limited, inadequate, inherited conceptions of God, as an external arbitrary world-ruler, who, apparently, is either not good or not omnipotent—a mere idol of the human mind. There will be a great revival of belief in the real God, the universally diffused individuality, who, for a glorious ultimate consummation, has expressed Himself under the limitations of phenomena, and is now working as the driving power behind evolution, assuring us that our heroes who are giving their lives in this war are fellow-workers with God. It is, however, possible for us to realize this immanence of God, this undeveloped Christ in us, without necessarily being crushed into the discovery by catastrophe. The eyes of the spirit are as completely in the power of man, if he only knew it, as the eyes of the body. The function of the Will, in controlling the mind, is the motor-muscle that lifts the eyelids of the Spirit. "Seeing Him who is invisible" is the inspired prescription for "walking in the Spirit." It is turning deliberately the inmost self to meet God in every conceivable circumstance of life, it is gazing into the face of God with the unalterable conviction of the endless resources of the love of that Divine Spirit in

whom "we live and move and have our being"; it is resting in the unshakable assurance of the never-ending changelessness of the loving purpose of God towards that humanity for whose being He is solely responsible. It is the emphatic denial that there can be any power of any kind in first causes, except God. "Thou couldest have no power at all against Me," said the Lord Jesus to Pilate, "except it were given thee from above"; and if "given from above," even when it lacerates it is a boon, even when it crucifies it is Divine. It is then the will, controlling the mind, that holds the rudder of life. This is no idle, imaginative process, it implies watchfulness, courage, determination.

Below Montreal, on the St Lawrence, are the far-famed Lachine rapids. It is the recreation of an afternoon to shoot those rapids in a steam-boat. Powerless seems the vessel in the mighty sweep of the pent-up water in the irresistible rush of what might be called "aqueous determinism"; but the helm is entrusted to an Indian keen of eye, steady of nerve, wise in experience. The brain and muscle of the holder of the rudder sit in judgment, as it were, upon the everlasting distinction between rock and channel, and the ship, by the rudder, is

assimilated to the purpose of the torrent. Thus, "keep thyself," says St Paul, by tenaciously holding the rudder of thy life, "in the love of God." The Pilot is the divinity in man, the mystic Christ, the true ego, the moral capacity, and the hand that holds the rudder obedient to every signal of the Pilot is the human will, the will that is "ours we know not how, ours to make it His." Keep thyself, then, by watchfulness, determination, restraint of sense impressions on the plane of the spiritual. Will to abide mentally in the secret place of the Most High, so shalt thou be "working out thine own salvation," and contributing to the uplifting of the nation.

From this standpoint we shall be in a condition to "endure all things," without being crushed with depression.

Paul says the fruit of walking in the spirit is "Love, joy" (I confess I have not reached that), but he continues, "peace" (and peace is better than joy), "long-suffering, faith," and so on; and though we have to weep and work and suffer on the material plane, our confidence and restfulness will be on the spiritual plane. This Armageddon, this battle of the Lord against Antichrist, is on the plane of the material, and on that plane we have to continue developing, and

perfecting, every atom of fighting power the British race possesses. We are in honour bound not to lay down our arms till adequate compensation has been enforced for the crushing cruelties perpetrated by these super-barbarians in Belgium and France. This we shall do, though to do it we shall have to mourn over the sacrifice of many more of Britain's brave sons. As the British Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs said recently, "Our unshakable faith in victory, our certainty of success, is based not upon matters of sentiment, but upon facts and calculations which logic cannot contradict." Add to those "facts and calculations" a calm, undoubting communion with the Infinite Spirit; concentrate the whole mind upon the Omnipotent, indwelling, silent Partner of every human life; realize that the changelessness of His perfect purpose is working behind those immutable laws, the violation of which by the German nation is causing us this pain and sorrow on the plane of the material; continue holding the entire situation into the golden cloud of the Divine Presence, and, whatever happens in Egypt, in Flanders, in Russia, you can affirm with confidence—"Our Father, Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen."

THE COUNSEL AND PLEASURE OF GOD

“ I am God, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure.”—ISAIAH xlvi. 10.

THE Infinite Creative Spirit was obviously possessing the mind of the greatest prophet of the Old Testament when Isaiah, probably in a trance condition, uttered this glorious promise of universal restitution, when God shall be All in All, when there shall be no more crying or pain, and when God shall wipe away all tears from all eyes.

Two inferences logically follow from the inspired declaration. First, that the whole world, and every conceivable combination of circumstances within it, however paradoxical and perplexing, are absolutely bound up, as to first causes, in the counsel and purpose of the Infinite Originator, who says of Himself, “ I am God, declaring the end from the beginning.” Secondly, that the highest expression of God’s consciousness, the human race, of which the Lord Jesus is the epitome, the climax, the

specialization, possesses a sphere of activity, as to second causes, within that Eternal counsel, as the minute living creatures in a drop of water magnified on a screen are seen to possess a sphere of activity within the drop that surrounds them. Man's highest sphere of activity, though he has vast responsibilities on the material plane, is on the spiritual plane, and consists in intelligent co-operation with the divine spirit of evolution, and in the use of his will, to compel his conscious mind, to realize that his true life, and the true life of all, is ensphered by God, and hidden in God, who will ultimately "do all His pleasure."

In the first thought lies the secret of "resting in the Lord and waiting patiently for Him," whilst energetically working on the material plane. In the second abides the stimulus for living in the spiritual atmosphere of thinking and not the material. It is lucidly expressed by St Paul in the Epistle of this morning: "Able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." How? Not by extra-cosmic interference with the human will, but "by the Power that worketh in us." If a million awakened souls in London, who know that the "Power that worketh in us" is the divine in man reaching forth to, and blending

with, the universal Divine, thus setting free influences which without that blending would be inert, were daily, at a given hour, to mentally lift the whole national crisis into the Presence, they would be controlling a spiritual force which would soon bring victory to the Allies in this terrible war, upon the issue of which hangs the international future of the world.

Now there are two points in connection with the present European crisis which it is necessary to emphasize. The first is the extreme urgency of the duty of the nation at the present moment upon the plane of material conditions. "First that which is natural, afterwards that which is spiritual." Nothing is gained by Britain, as a national ostrich, burying her head in the sand of a frivolous boasting optimism. It is wiser to face the crisis with fortitude, patriotism and determination. Read Mr Lloyd George's preface to his book, "Through Terror to Triumph." It is a noble, vigorous clarion-call. It is full of confidence in ultimate victory, based on British moral and physical superiority; but he emphatically urges that, in this greatest war-struggle in the world's history, the utmost conceivable effort of the nation is essential and that we must be ready to sacrifice all we

own, and all we like, for our native land, if victory is to be assured.

Now these are not the words of a scare-monger, or of one who has a political party axe to grind, and if Britain is to be saved from the atrocities customary to the cruelty and hatred of this nation of murderers and pirates, who for forty years have been preparing for organized slaughter, we at home must realize the seriousness of the crisis and nerve ourselves to face it in a true spirit of unity, courage and self-sacrifice. We must be prepared unmurmuringly to endure a large increase in taxation. If it is imperative, Britain must submit without hesitation to a temporary suspension of individual liberty in the direction of enforced national service, not only for the forces in the field, but for munitions and other work at home. We must all aim at ever-increasing economy in luxuries and even in necessities ; and traders, commercial speculators, and middlemen of all kinds, must be prepared for the complete abolition, by Act of Parliament, of all possibility of making profits out of the war. Thus on the physical, the material, plane, we shall be " coming to the help of the Lord against the mighty," and placing ourselves with full self-sacrifice in the current of the will of the divine

spirit of evolution, who says: "My counsel shall stand and I will do all My pleasure." Then, on the spiritual plane, our duty is even clearer and more urgent. We must, by conscious realization of our own true Being, create a thought-atmosphere, and help to lift the Deists and the Pessimists of the nation into a higher, nobler, less limited conception of God and His relation to the universe and to man. Correspondence in the Press convinces us that many religious minds find grave difficulty in reconciling their traditional conception of God with the fact of His non-interference with the atrocious crimes committed against non-combatants, women, and children, by these poisoners, murderers, ravishers and incendiaries who aim at dominating and enslaving the world. The faith of not a few, mentally stunned by these abominations, is "waxing cold." There is nothing irreverent in their attitude. It is just a cry of distress issuing from mental pain. The one perfect God-inhabited human being once uttered that cry of distress. On Calvary He wailed, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" It is a temporary symptom, a nerve shock, it always passes away, but it has its dangers, for it is, while it lasts, abiding outside the door

of "the secret place of the Most High." Theologies which concrete illimitable truth into definite dogmas, while they have their undoubted value, possess great powers of obstruction as to mental growth. The distinction between God worshipped on the Theological plane alone, and God worshipped on the intuitive and spiritual plane also, is incalculable. God realized on the theological plane alone is a fixed point, with finality. God realized on the intuitive and spiritual plane also, is a divine acquisition, increasing in proportion to receptivity, and which has not, and never will have, finality. It is a gradual unfolding of the Soul's hidden capacities accompanied by new and ever-enlarging conceptions of the Infinite Originator, with an ever-increasing sense of rest and security in conscious connection with the soul of the Universe who is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think by the Power that worketh in us." "By the Power that worketh in us." That is Paul's way of expressing the fact that God "will do all His pleasure" by functioning in this material world as the driving power behind evolution. Now if the Deists and the Pessimists could only realize that God is not a spectator from without of the sufferings of the World, but a keen

sharer from within, their perplexity would be relieved. Paul says God is "above all and in all." God is not only extra-cosmic, He is also intra-cosmic. God is immanent; immanence implies consciousness, consciousness implies sensitiveness; therefore, as not even a sparrow falls to the ground without God partaking in its suffering, He travails in pain in the bodies and souls of men and animals. When under the shock of the fiendish atrocities in Belgium and France the Deist asks, "Where was God?" the answer is, where alone He could be, in the very heart and centre of the sorrow, in every victim crushed and violated and mutilated. "My counsel shall stand," He says through Isaiah, and His "counsel" is non-interference with the law of cause and effect in His pre-ordained arrangement for training and educating humanity. It is perfectly obvious that in the unthinkable beginning, when creative mind was about to express Himself in phenomena, if alternative methods of producing a race of moral beings presented themselves to His thought, He could not have chosen the least good. Therefore, the fact that He has chosen this method, which entails suffering to Himself, is the absolute guarantee that it is not only the best but the only method,

and " His counsel shall stand, and He will do all His pleasure."

Now most of us know that the "counsel of God that shall stand," and the method through which He "will do all His pleasure," and His ability to "do more than we can ask or think by the Power that worketh in us," is descriptive of the function of the "Mystic Christ" within, the gradual unfolding of the divine in every man. Salvation by Christ is not being saved from deserved chastisement by the substitution before a divine Judge of the merits of the Christ outside you. It is gaining salvation, that is perfection, by the gradual uplifting of your whole being by the Christ within you. By our realization of this, by keeping ourselves in harmony with "the Power that worketh in us," by living mentally in our highest ideal of ourselves and others, which ideal will externalize itself in human lives, we shall, first, be saved from many heartaches. We shall think not mournfully but triumphantly of our heroes who are laying down their human lives for God and their country, we shall not mourn for them as if they were gone, we shall realize those words in Sir Edwin Arnold's poem :—

" When we come where they have stepped,
We shall wonder why we wept."

Then, again, we shall clearly see that the horror of this war is thinning the veil between the phenomenal and the real and opening spiritual eyesight. Examples are reaching us by the hundred in private letters from the front. The letter to his parents, found on the body of a sergeant of the 8th Manchester Regiment, killed at Sedl Bahr in Gallipoli, is a sample :—

“ If I fall, grieve not for me. My soul shall rest in the heavens above. There I shall see my beloved sisters and brothers, who I know wait for me with outstretched arms. I am ready to face the foe, free from fear or conscience. My one wish is that you do not grieve, otherwise you will disturb my spirit, and I will await your coming in the haven of rest, where nought can separate us.”

Then, secondly, if we live in this mental attitude, we shall contribute our share to that thought-atmosphere, that accentuation of spiritual against material, which, by a process of spirit-vibration, melts frozen hearts, dissipates pessimism, and reanimates humanity. It is part of that “ counsel that shall stand ” that a prevailing atmosphere of wrong thinking is counteracted and transformed by the secret, silent power of true spiritual thinking. We have most of us seen a Glacier, millions of tons of ice as still as death ; but it is moving. What moves it ? Dynamite might pulverize

it, but it could not move it. What converts it from a death-dealing monster into a source of fertility and life? What causes it to slide slowly down the mountain gorge and issue in fertilizing rivers? Not the sun, for it moves no faster in summer than in winter. It is the gradual radiation of the unobserved, in-dwelling heat of the earth, acting upon its under surface, that melts and moves the glacier. Thus it is with the congealing, stagnating, moral glacier of hard material thinking in the world and in the Church. The quiet, spiritual thinking of thousands of believing, praying men and women who realize God keeps the glacier moving and transforms evil into good. Let us strive to answer Mr Lloyd George's challenge from the spiritual plane; we can contribute individually to the melting of the glacier of cold materialism by ceaseless mental "walking in the spirit." We are, each one of us, parts of an organic whole. Isolated individuality is an illusion. Think strongly into God. Think into Infinite Life. Hold the whole of Britain in your mind while you thus think. Thought is creative, thought on the psychic plane can affect the nerve-currents of others; how much more vivid and effective must thought be on the spiritual plane. Help

to melt the glacier with your upward God-ward thinking, and you will be a vehicle, an instrument of Him who is only waiting to be recognized that He may "do exceeding abundantly, above all that we can ask or think, by the Power that worketh in us."

THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT

“ The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.”—ROM. viii. 16.

THE teaching of the Collect, Epistle and Gospel for the eighth Sunday after Trinity expresses the peace that comes from honestly carrying out the inspired injunction, “ Keep yourselves in the love of God.” This is the only secret of the quiet mind in this unexampled crisis in our National history. No peace is to be found in analysing the incidents in the circumference of life, in reading the Jeremiads in the pessimist section of the Press, in deprecating unpatriotic strikes jeopardizing the country for selfish interests. Peace comes only from mental withdrawal from the circumference, and quiet resting in “ the secret place of the Most High,” in which resting-place we are in the right mental attitude for prevailing intercession. A golden thread of this divine optimism shines through all the teaching to-day, encouraging us to rest the weary heart in the bosom of Infinite Divine Love because we know that Divine

Love dwells in us and works behind all things.

“ The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit.” This is the inspired declaration with which the Father-Spirit outside us stimulates the heavenward energy of the mystic Christ within us. No words could more clearly express the relation between Universal Spirit which is God, and differentiated spirit which is man. Each separate individual life-centre is a specimen of the differentiation of Universal Spirit into the particular. Therefore God and you, whether you know it or not, are elementally, essentially inseverable. God the Spirit, the primary originating power, is the root, the basis, the substance of every individual life ; always present in that life and working through it ; and being also universally present outside that life, appeals constantly, suggestively, stimulatingly to the differentiated spirit within each individual man. Spirit is the Infinite Intelligence underlying the totality of all things in which Infinite Intelligence has expressed itself, in multitudinous specific forms, whilst remaining itself a perfect unity. That is the justification of the formula, “ God is all and all is God.” The basis of inward peace is the knowledge of this transcendent

fact, and living in recognition of it, and this is "keeping yourself in the love of God." It is an axiom which is incontrovertible that our life will take its whole tone from our conception of our relation to God. As our consciousness of unity with God becomes more perfect, the power of the Infinite Spirit to bear witness with, and fill and guide, our individual spirit becomes more apparent and more influential.

This assurance of our oneness with God underlies the words of Jesus recorded in the gospel, "Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?" The expression is a *reductio ad absurdum* which wholly abolishes that fundamental misrepresentation which teaches that men are the children of wrath by birth and the children of God by conversion or by Baptism. Why can you not gather grapes of thorns? Because the divine natural law of similarity, continuity, sequence and heredity make it impossible. Try it. Everyone understands the familiar process of grafting; try to bud a fig on to a thistle, try to graft a vine on to a bramble, and see what the result will be. The true lesson lies below the analogy. The conclusion is, neither can God. It is as though the divine teacher said: You men should under-

stand that what is contradictory, erroneous to you, is equally impossible with God.

The law, "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap," is an axiom equally binding on God. If a vine be not sown a vine, it can never become a vine. If a man be not a son of God when projected into human birth by the Divine mind, he can never become a son of God. You may graft some choice fruit-bearing variety on to your vine stock, but it must be a vine stock on which you graft it. There must be organic affinity between the stock and the graft. Similarly, the potentiality of the ideal life manifested in Jesus the Historic Christ can only be grafted on to the universal Mystic Christ. The divine life manifested in Him who "for us men and for our salvation came down from Heaven" cannot be engrafted upon anything but a divine life. That life may be dormant, rudimentary, uncultivated, but it must be divine. Thus is the true dignity of humanity affirmed, divine parentage vindicated, the elemental inseverability of God and man laid down as a proposition, in the gospel for to-day.

Then how amazing is the optimism of the Collect, emphasizing the responsibility of the Creating Spirit for every form of activity in the

whole universe, acknowledging no Ruler but the One Supreme Intelligence, addressing Him as "God whose never-failing Providence ordereth all things both in Heaven and on earth." How clearly does that express the attitude in which we should approach the Heavenly Father in the intercession we are asked to make to-day. Unless you are prepared to use language in a wholly non-natural sense you cannot pray this prayer from any standpoint save that of tranquil belief in the Eternal and resistless Omnipotence of God. Either the Church has put into your mouth the language of delusion or you are justified in believing that God's infinite purpose can never be rendered ultimately futile and abortive by the self-conscious, self-determining obstinacy of finite man. Whatever may be the blighting influence of persistent aversion from God, if even one solitary specimen of the human race were able to stiffen himself by final impenitence into endless rebellion against Eternal Love, then God does not "order all things both in Heaven and on earth." So that we may know in what attitude to blend our minds with the Infinite Mind in intercession, the ground is cleared before us by the Church's prayer declaring that God's purpose, immanent in

human nature, must ultimately prove too strong for all perversion. Based upon this proposition, the "haunting oracles that stir our clay," the appalling horrors with which we are sometimes confronted, though they may half break our hearts, can never for one moment shake our confidence in God. The strenuous nature of that law of evolution, which is the driving power behind Britain and her allies in this sanguinary war, can be recognized and endured when we know that God, with His "unfailing Providence," "ordereth all things," God the universal Love-Force, the Absolute Substance out of whom all individual forms of existence are constantly emerging, God recognized by the inextinguishable conscience of all thinking men of all ages as omnipotent, responsible and indivisible. It does not really signify by what name you call Him, though we have the privilege of using the revealed name "Father." Remember the affirmation from Cleanthes, inscribed on John Addington Symonds' gravestone in Rome:—

"Lead Thou me, God, law, reason, motion, life,
All names alike for Thee are vain and hollow."

They are, because God is the All, and no one name contains Him. He says, "I am the Lord and there is none else."

Then this unhesitating declaration convinces you that "all things," even that painful product of the evolving cosmic mind called war, "work together for good." If God "ordereth all things" there can be no everlasting rival to the one author of the Universe. The whole mystery of evil must be not only included in the original purpose, for God can never be taken by surprise, but also completely under the Divine overrule as to its ultimate issue. If He "ordereth all things," while we cannot deny the malignant results of the perverted use of the human will, to attempt to account for these results upon the supposition that there are two Eternal elemental principles, alongside each other, is to tamper with the very idea of God. The majestic declaration in Isaiah xlv. 6, "I am the Lord, there is none else, I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create evil, I the Lord do all these things," authoritatively obliterates the "two principles" superstition. Moreover, it offers to the true thinker the only philosophical working explanation of the phenomenon called evil. When you have accepted in its completeness the statement in the Collect that "God ordereth all things"; when you have recognized the logical impossibility of any

person, matter, spirit, or principle existing in antagonism to the resistless omnipotence of God for even the fraction of a second ; when you believe, with no mental reservation, that there is only one principle at work, only one love pulsing, only one purpose evolving, only one end possible, which end was involved from the very beginning, then you begin to perceive that there cannot be good without an opposite whereby to recognize it, that the true life of divine sonship can only emerge from deep contrasts, that in a sinless, painless school of education the moral element would be lacking ; that for want of the contrast, goodness, in such a world, would have no significance in the conscious life of man, and you begin to understand the philosophy of the expression, "I create evil, saith the Lord." You see that it means, that God is responsible for the conditions under which what we call evil became possible, and that He knew that these conditions were necessary to produce real good.

Now there are certain points that I desire to emphasize to-day, and the first is this. When once this thrilling touch of the Universal appealing to the particular has been felt even dimly, and the perception and affirmation of sonship has stirred within you, though it may

be rudimentary, as yet indefinable, it can never be argued away. Though it may be ignored, resisted, silenced, it takes its place henceforth in your life as a mental fact. A blind man receiving sight, ever so imperfectly, could never be argued out of it, the glimpse of sunlight and trees and flowers is enough for him, and he knows that he sees. The light itself beareth witness with the awakened light-capacity within him that he is a child of the daylight.

I once told you of a remarkable man who some years ago came to London to consult me. He is now passed over and is in the Father's school of progression. He was a man of culture, education, refinement, who had been restored to liberty after a period of penal servitude. He told me that in his youth he had been spiritually awakened, the affirmation of sonship had stirred within him, and that he had never been able to silence its witness. He said that when he began to wander from the path of right he strove with the whole power of his intellect to become an unbeliever. He came to London and placed himself under the training of the leading Atheist lecturer of that day, in the eager desire to prove his religion to be a self-delusion, but

in vain. Out of the lowest depths the spirit ever bore tormenting witness to him that he was a child of God. He "arose and came to his Father" before he died, but his experience is an illustration of the fact that one operation of the mystic Christ is to make it impossible for a man to be conscious of himself as something apart from God. Men may not know it, but it is the mystic Christ that makes them miserable when they sin against Divine Immanence. It is that restless, galling sense of self-conviction, stinging the conscience without comforting the heart, that drives some to suicide. Men who are under the dark dominion of self wonder sometimes why they cannot be happy in sensuality, why they are wretched when they fall. It is the witness within them of the "Mystic Christ." It is the spirit bearing witness with their spirit, it is the immanence of God in man, protesting perpetually and automatically against being smothered in the flesh. It is the standing tribunal, the great white Throne, immanent in all men, before which the doings of the lower nature are perpetually brought for judgment. Thank God for the white Throne within. If we were wholly animal we should not feel it, any more than the anthropoid ape

feels it. The fact that we know that certain actions are wrong, even though we continue to do them, is the absolute proof of the existence within us of a moral judgment, and a moral judgment is a proof of divine sonship ; the spirit is bearing witness with our spirit that we are sons of God, though we may be dragging that sonship through the mire.

Then, again, the “Mystic Christ” is not only the guarantee of our immortality and the assurance of our ultimate perfection, but if it is wilfully disobeyed in this life it becomes the fire of hell in the next life, the mental hell of self-knowledge. When, for example, a whole nation deliberately unchains the powers of hell to further its own material interests ; when it crucifies the mystic Christ within it by devilish cruelty ; when the calculated policy of the higher military authorities of that nation surpasses in enormity the sin of crucifying Christ on Calvary, by ordering soldiers to bayonet pregnant women, to torture prisoners, and to murder infants, the responsible authorities of that nation are preparing for themselves a mental hell that even the imagination of a Dante could not conceive ; for the time will come when “the Spirit will bear witness with their spirit,” that, all the time, they were the

sons of God blaspheming their own divinity. Meanwhile the echo of the voice of the Historic Christ rings through Britain to-day, saying, “ Thinkest thou that I am come to send peace on earth ; I am not come to send peace, but a sword.” It is for us undauntedly to wield that sword against this curse of the world, this German Empire, to the last farthing of our money, the last ounce of our strength, the last drop of our blood. In that spirit we can endorse the resolution which will be submitted to the Empire on August 4th (1915) :—

“ That on this anniversary of the declaration of a righteous war, the Empire records its inflexible determination to continue to a victorious end the struggle in maintenance of those ideals of liberty and justice which are the common and sacred cause of the Allies.”

With that determination fixed in the mind I can invite all to join in some of the suffrages in the long Litany suggested by the Bishop for to-day. We can pray :—

“ That it may please Thee to look with mercy on the nation at home, to turn its heart and life to Thee, to deliver it from unbelief and indifference, to grant us spiritual and religious revival, that the nation may seek Thy grace and Thy blessing in prayer and worship and righteousness of life.

“ That it may please Thee to take our cause into

Thine own hand, giving victory to our arms, and helping us to restore to Belgium, France and Russia all that they have lost."

Finally, this revelation of the mystic Christ, assuring us that God and man are elementally inseverable, should wipe away many tears, and provide boundless consolation in the keen anguish of losing the loved, visible presence of the heroes who by the thousand are giving their lives in this battle of the Lord. They have won their crown, they have earned the "Jesus Cross," they have "borne in their bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus." We may be perfectly happy about them, though we yearn for their presence every hour. Cardinal Mercier said, in his noble pastoral which so enraged the Kaiser, "A brave man who has given his life in defence of his country's honour, and the vindication of violated justice, without any doubt whatever is assured by the Christ of the safety of his Soul. 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends,' and the soldier who dies to save his brothers reaches this highest of all degrees of love." My hours are passed daily at the present time with broken hearts. "Rachel is weeping for her children" all over Britain. I can do no more than remind them of those lines of Sir Edwin

Arnold, which are a poetic paraphrase of an eternal truth. The Angel speaks first and says :—

“ The one whom you call dead
Lives and loves you. Gone 'tis true
From such light as shines for you.
But in the light you cannot see
Of unfulfilled felicity,
In enlarging Paradise,
Lives a life that never dies.”

Then the loved one in the spirit world joins in and says :—

“ Farewell, dear ! yet not farewell ;
Where I am you too shall dwell.
I am gone before your face,
A moment's time, a little space.
When you come where I have stepped
You will wonder why you wept.”

A YEAR OF WAR

AUGUST 4, 1914, TO AUGUST 4, 1915

“And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not.”—REV. i. 17.

ONE year ago to-day Germany, after forty years' secret preparation, veiled behind a mist of lying and deception, commenced her unprecedented attack upon the civilization of the world, and, at this serious crisis, Britain needs to feel that Right Hand and hear that Voice saying, “Fear not.” But Britain must truly believe in that Voice and valiantly deserve the help of that Right Hand. Clear faith in God, and supreme national effort are at this moment the essential factors of victory. Clear faith in God. This vision to John in Patmos is the message to us all: “I am,” He says, “the first and the last, the Alpha and the Omega.” That is, He is the “All,” exhibited as a thinkable Personality.

God, the Infinite, is not a Person, though there is nothing lacking of all that we understand by personality in Him, except outward

form, and that which John saw was the outward form, assumed by Infinite Spirit, to enable the human mind to think Personality of God, who, in essence, is impersonal.

John's vision of Patmos is, therefore, a revelation to us of the nearness and tenderness of God as expressed in the Person of the Historic Christ, and an assurance that the spirit world is all around us at all times.

The Spirit world. The world seen by Elisha's servant at Dothan. It is sometimes spoken of as "the fourth dimension." Geometricians have encouraged us to believe in a fourth dimension of space, as different from length and breadth and height as each of these is different from the other ; a world within a world, transcending it, pervading it, surrounding it, and yet not cognizable by us. St Paul speaks of four dimensions ; he enumerates length, breadth, depth and height. The Greek word translated height is *ὕψος*, translated in the Douay version by the Latin word *sublimitas*, the sublime dimension, the dimension in which the Lord Jesus is ruling as King, the dimension in which our dear spirit friends are, blending with our thoughts, and mingling with our lives. We cannot perceive it as a sense experience because we are on another plane of consciousness,

though inner vision sometimes apprehends it as a thrilling reality. It has been true of us, of each one of us, many times in the changes and chances of this mortal life, that, from this Sublime dimension, the Personality of the Infinite Spirit, which John saw at Patmos, has stood by us in some moment of peril and dereliction, and has laid His right hand on us, and we knew it not. And what was the word spoken to John, and so to all of us ? It was spoken to John that we may know that it is spoken to all of us. It is the word, which if incorporated into the verities of existence would drive darkness out of life, "Fear not." Doubt and fear are the two most destructive influences in the spiritual life, and fear includes doubt. The right hand of the Revealed Symbol of the Infinite Spirit is laid upon us, and He says, " Fear not, I am the All, you are part of the All, there is nothing to fear, the Eternal God is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms." To free the mind from fear would cut at the root of most physical and spiritual disorders. Bodily disorders are constantly the result of some fear thought, or some inherited mental false belief ; and Paul's prescription, " Be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds," " Change your mode of thinking," would cure many a bodily disease,

for the subjective mind, which builds the body, takes its suggestions from our normal mental habits. It is manifestly true on the spiritual plane. In Wisdom xvii. 12 we read, " Fear is nothing else but a betraying of the succours which reason offereth." " The succours which reason offereth " is not a frivolous optimism, but consciousness of oneness with Infinite life, the certainty that the only real life we possess is the life of God within us ; it is to say with Emily Brontë :—

" No coward soul is mine,
No trembler in earth's storm-troubled sphere,
I see heaven's glory shine
And faith shines equal, arming me from fear.
O God within my breast,
Almighty, ever-present Deity,
Life that in me has rest,
Whilst I, undying life, have power in Thee."

So it brings us back to my subject of last Sunday. " God within my breast " is the mystic Christ—the mystic Christ is the divinity within us that makes actions evil which would not be evil if He were absent from us. The mystic Christ within us creates moral consciousness, and moral consciousness puts the stamp of evil on certain actions and self-made conditions ; and as moral consciousness is God immanent, differentiated Spirit, it is in this sense that I

interpreted the expression "I create evil, saith the Lord." Things are what the receptive faculty makes them. Did you ever consider this most important axiom on the physical plane? Sound and light and perfume, for example, are not, till your receptive faculty makes them. They are vibrations of varying velocities. They only become sound, light, perfume when they are cognized and tabulated by your brain, which is capable of interpreting certain vibrations into sensations. There is no perfume in the rose; there are vibrations of a certain velocity, which, when they reach a special faculty within you, produce the sensation of Rose-perfume. There is no sound in the firing of a cannon; there are waves of air which when they reach a window break it, when they reach water, ruffle it, but when they reach the faculty of hearing produce the sensation of sound. There is no luminousness in light; there is the vibration of certain waves of ether upon the retina and fibres of the optic nerve which translates them into the sensation of light. Outward nature is a shadow of the inward and spiritual. The organs and faculties of outward nature are shadows of organs and faculties in the spiritual. There is no external objective entity called evil; the mystic Christ

within you makes it. There is no definite standard of moral obliquity attaching to actions as actions. A tiger when he kills a villager in India is not a murderer ; a hog when he thrusts his weaker neighbour from the trough is not a glutton ; the anthropoid ape who steals another's food is not a thief. No sin, no wrongness appertains to the actions. Only where the moral consciousness belonging to divine immanence has evolved a faculty capable of sitting in judgment upon actions and producing the sensation of wrongness can there be sin. Therefore the sensation of wrongness, even when self-condemnatory, is a proof of the existence of the Mystic Christ within you. As the recognition of perfume proves that you have an organ of smell, as the recognition of sound proves that you have an auditory nerve, as the recognition of luminousness proves that you have an optical apparatus, so the recognition of the wrongness of certain acts, attitudes and appetites proves the existence of the Mystic Christ within you. Thus it is, as I said last Sunday, that, in the most degraded, " the spirit beareth witness " with the sinner that he is the child of God.

The conclusion which I drew was, that, " Once a son of God, always a son of God, whatever you do, however greatly you fall." This unalter-

able fact accounts for the hell in which some live who go on consciously sinning against the light.

Then there follows a keen incentive to co-operate with the strivings of the Mystic Christ within us, a determination to effect a steady, gradual conquest of the lower life by the higher, through conflict, resistance, suppression, inhibition of the lower self. As Tennyson says:—

“Arise and fly

The reeling Faun, the sensual feast
Move upward, working out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die.”

There is also a profound consolation from the revealed certainty that the divine sonship within us being part of Infinite life can never ultimately fail. That obviously was the meaning of St Paul's cry after the vivid picture of his own struggles with the law of his members. I don't know what his struggles were, he evidently hated his body and calls it “vile body,” but he seems to draw a long breath when he says, “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” He knew that Jesus Christ our Lord is the specialization of the Mystic Christ within all men, the “Christ in you the hope of glory.”

Just here comes in the obvious and powerful teaching of the gospel of to-day, the ninth Sunday after Trinity, the responsibility of

stewardship. Infinite Spirit has entrusted to all nations and all individuals the responsibility of being vehicles for His own Self-realization and Self-manifestation. As the mind becomes open to the full meaning of this fact the immense possibilities contained in it become apparent, and if it were clearly recognized there would at once be peace on earth. I am convinced that our Lord spoke the parable of the rapacious land-agent, commonly called the parable of the unjust steward, to set us thinking on those lines. The parable is generally misunderstood, but, though I have explained it a hundred times, I will just remind you that in those days the land-agent or steward paid to the absentee proprietor of an estate a fixed annual income, reserving for himself whatever extra produce the estate could honestly yield. In carrying out this arrangement the steward in the parable impoverished the soil and distressed the tenantry by exacting too heavy a personal profit in addition to the fixed annual sum payable to the absentee proprietor. He is accused to his master of wasting his goods, and receives his dismissal. This land-agent is shrewd enough to begin at once to make restitution from his own pocket to the tenants he had wronged. It is not from his employer's fixed income,

observe, but from his own undue profits that the reductions are made, and when his employer comes to hear of it he commends that rapacious land-agent. It is as if he had said, " You are a clever rascal, you are not more honest for what you have done, you have done it only because you were frightened, and it is not conviction of danger but conviction of sin that should change a life, but anyhow you have attempted to conciliate others by punishing yourself." The analogy drawn is that many professedly religious people are not even up to that standard, and that they would be wise to make friends of their fellow-men by the use of their worldly possessions, that, when their material possessions fail, the friends that they have thus made, and who have passed over before them, may receive them gratefully in the other world. As to stewardship ; every adult man and woman is, in a sense, a steward of the soul of the nation, of the morality and integrity of the nation. The nation is passing through the fire. Might we not fairly ask the question, Have the spiritual forces of the nation realized in the past their responsibility for our national sins, for the vice of our streets, the food-wasting, home-shattering profligacy, the blighted morality and national deterioration, which are the result of the vast

accumulation of the power of the traffic in intoxicating drink? In peace time the vast majority of church-going Britons have lived in the midst of records of misery and crime, and have not felt one jot or tittle of responsibility towards it. Now we are alarmed as to its weakening effect upon the nation during wartime. A voice seems to be saying, "Give an account of thy stewardship!" and our legislators, still unwilling to face Lord Rosebery's dictum, "If the State does not control the liquor traffic, the liquor traffic will control the State," are timidly tinkering with this great cancer of England's national life. I allow, of course, that part of our shortcoming in dealing with the drink curse and labour troubles arises from our splendid national liberty. Remedial measures possible under autocratic Imperialism are not possible in a country whose motto is, "Hereditary bondsmen, know ye not, who would be free, himself must strike the blow," but it is well to consider the effect of grappling resolutely with a national sin in the case of one of our allies. To what do you attribute the gallant resistance and spirited resolution of the Russians against overwhelming numbers and vast superiority in guns and munitions? Let me read you an extract from a letter written

to me by a communicant of St John's from Petrograd :—

“ The first thing that must strike anyone who has known Russia for the last twenty years is the look of health and happiness stamped upon all classes as the result of nearly a year's total abstention from alcohol. The poorer folk, even the kindly but once besotted cab-drivers, are all transfigured. In this respect Russia is certainly reaping a blessing from the war, a blessing so great that one needs to see it with one's own eyes to realize the full wonder of it. Here, as at home, one finds that the enemy has been busy poisoning the sources of spiritual enthusiasm. There is certainly a party in Russia who are under German influence, and who talk the same kind of pernicious nonsense as one sometimes hears in England. I had hoped that this was not so in Russia, but, like ourselves, the Russians have allowed the Germans to get a very strong hold in all purely material matters. Thank God, however, Russia possesses sealed fountains of spirituality and idealism which no German or other poisonous influences can reach. One feels this when one goes about, as I have been doing the last few days, from hospital to hospital talking with the doctors and nurses, and, above all, with the soldiers themselves. Here all the suffering seems to be quite lost in a wonderful serenity and radiance. Yesterday I was talking to a soldier of six-and-twenty with both his legs gone. He was sitting up in bed keeping everyone around him happy and cheerful, and in his face was a look like some invincible but very tender Archangel. I now understand what Khomiakov meant by 'the Paschal spirit of the Russian people.' I am going on to Moscow and probably into the country near Jaroslav, where I shall see the results of the temper-

ance movement among the women, who are saving and making the home what it has never been before. As a doctor said to me yesterday, 'In spite of all the horrors I can hardly wish the war to end until the temperance habit has been firmly implanted.' The Russians are buying their salvation with their blood, but they are getting something eternal for the price paid. How one wishes that England might profit more by this great opportunity of doing violence to her national sins."

All who love our native land must echo that wish. If the soul of the British nation would rise to the occasion, and fairly face the deadly diseases in England's national life, it would be our Pentecost after our Calvary, and we should thank God for all that we have endured.

But obviously the deepest sense in which we are stewards is with regard to the Mystic Christ, the real divine self within us. Man is not "lord of himself, that heritage of woe," but a steward of himself for the originating Spirit who has made him to be a tabernacle of God. This should be the dominant thought of every human life. From this truth realized come "the Right Hand," and the voice saying "Fear not." That divine germ is within us, and with recognition and watchful culture it will increase in power and an endless progressive future will be before us. It is possible to stunt its growth, to smother it under the claims of the lower self, and thus to

be a faithless steward. Then what we call death will be the challenge, "Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward."

Recognition of the Mystic Christ within is a marvellously controlling thought. It consecrates to the service of God Immanent every energy, every affection, every aspiration.

Moreover, it is the spirit within us making intercession, and it will be the real source of our power when we are solemnly invited, as a whole nation, to seek humble, trusting communion with God. The real strength of an Empire does not consist only in the perfection of its military organization, the vast store of its munitions, the heroism of its fighting men, important as these are. The power of an Empire depends upon the faith and spiritual insight and communion with God of the individuals composing it. That is the inner meaning of the inspired declaration, "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."

That saying implies recognition that :—

"There is on earth a greater thing,
Veiled though it be, than Parliament or King."

And that "Greater thing" is God immanent in man waiting to be recognized and claimed.

And so I plead with you all to pray without ceasing, to hold into the Infinite Presence the “safety, honour and welfare of our Sovereign and his dominions”; the peril threatening Britain from the insane hate of the Germans thirsting to perpetrate nameless deeds of brutality upon our women, our children, our homes. Let your intercession be in calm trust, without one shadow of pessimism or fear, remembering that the Divine Presence, ever “closer than breathing, lays His right hand upon England, saying, “Fear not, I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I have the Keys of death and of Hades.” Thus:—

“God’s greatness flows around our incompleteness,
Round our restlessness His rest.”

A THOUGHT FOR HOLY WEEK

“ And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter, and he remembered, and he went out and wept bitterly.”—LUKE xxii. 61.

HE remembered ! At this season, millions, who profess and call themselves Christians, will be “ remembering.” In the trenches, as well as in the churches, there will be a concentration of thought, of memory, upon the Central Figure in those final scenes which preceded the tragedy of Calvary.

Great is the creative power of concentrated thought ; by this power the Divine Personality will be vividly brought before us. In a sense we may fairly describe as real, the Lord will “ turn and look upon us.” He will look into our minds and He will seem to say, “ This have I done for thee, what doest thou for Me ? ” “ Is it nothing to you all ye that pass by ? ” And then, to many, will come that experience described in Goldsmith’s lines :—

“ Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,
Swell at the breast, and turns the past to pain.”

The “ past will be turned into pain ” when we

“remember” how often we have defied His moral standard, yielded to the carnal self, ignored Him in our dealings with our fellow-men, denied Him by our lives, and when we think thereon we shall weep.

They were beautiful and pathetic lines which appeared in the “Spectator” last year called “Christ in Flanders” :—

“ We had forgotten You, or very nearly—
You did not seem to touch us very nearly—

Of course we thought about You now and then ;
Especially in any time of trouble—
We knew that You were good in time of trouble—
But we are very ordinary men.

And there were always other things to think of—
There’s lots of things a man has got to think of—

His work, his home, his pleasure, and his wife ;
And so we only thought of You on Sunday—
Sometimes, perhaps, not even on a Sunday—
Because there’s always lots to fill one’s life.

And, all the while, in street or lane or byway—
In country lane, in city street, or byway—

You walked among us, and we did not see
Your feet were bleeding as You walked our pav-
ements—

How did we miss Your Footprints on our pave-
ments ?—

Can there be other folk as blind as we ?

*Now we remember ; over here in Flanders—
(It isn’t strange to think of You in Flanders)—*

This hideous warfare seems to make things clear.

We never thought about You much in England—
But now that we are far away from England—
 We have no doubts, we know that You are here.

You helped us pass the jest along the trenches—
Where, in cold blood, we waited in the trenches—
 You touched its ribaldry and made it fine.
You stood beside us in our pain and weakness—
We're glad to think You understand our weakness—
 Somehow it seems to help us not to whine.

We think about You kneeling in the Garden—
Ah ! God ! the agony of that dread Garden—
 We know You prayed for us upon the Cross.
If anything could make us glad to bear it—
'Twould be the knowledge that You willed to bear it—
 Pain—death—the uttermost of human loss.

Though we forgot You—You will not forget us—
We feel so sure that You will not forget us—
 But stay with us until this dream is past.
And so we ask for courage, strength, and pardon—
Especially, I think, we ask for pardon—
 And that You'll stand beside us to the last."

Yes, He will stand beside those heroes to the last. They are fighting the battle of the Lord, they are fighting not only for their own homes, they are fighting for Belgium, for France, for Europe. They are fighting in the spirit of those fine lines of J. R. Lowell :—

" He's true to God who's true to man wherever wrong
 be done,
To the humblest and weakest 'neath the All-
 beholding sun ;

That wrong is done to us, and they are slaves most base,
Whose love of right is for themselves and not for all their race."

He will not forget them, they are fighting for the liberation of the race. He will be their "White Comrade," when they lie stricken on the field of battle. He will "stand beside them to the last."

Carry this "remembrance" of the Lord Jesus into a somewhat deeper region of thought. Meet the "look" of the Lord upon the plane of "identification" rather than upon the plane of "substitution." Remember that He said, "I in them and Thou in Me"; that He inspired St John to say, "As He is, so are we in this world"; that when He was passing from visibility He said, "I am going to My Father and your Father." He claimed identification with us.

The one reconciling explanation of human life is the recognition of the principle that our individual lives are drawn, as was the individual life of Jesus, directly from the Infinite Mind, differentiating Itself in human life-centres, under the impulse of Infinite Love. As we "climb the altar stairs of things created that slope through darkness up to God," we discover the Secret of Life, and we know that God is the

universal Substance. We realize that Thought must have been before phenomena, that every visible thing evolved was involved in the Eternal Mind, and that we are, individually, parts of God's consciousness. In majestic, limitless freedom He thought you. He can never therefore unthink you. You are His and He is yours for ever. "Thy Maker is thy husband," says the Prophet. "He has taken you for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish," and all that He has is yours. Obviously all words used for God, such as Husband, and even Father, are symbols and limitations, and we are out of our depth when we try to realize the qualities of Infinite Mind as we are accustomed to think of a Person.

But our Father has relieved this mental strain by specializing His moral qualities in the Personality of the Lord Jesus. It is as though God said to us, "When you desire to think Me as a Person you can discover My Personal qualities in My Specialization, in whom I was "manifested in the Flesh." From such premises it is impossible to draw too large, too positive, too glorious conclusions concerning either God or humanity. And from such complete understanding of your relation to emerge the activities that form character. Start from the pre-

mise that universal humanity is the self-expression of God, and the motive for active, intelligent co-operation with the divine love that is pulsing within is obvious and cogent. The phenomena of the universe are manifestations of God, but they are automatic. We are not automata ; we weave character, as the silkworm weaves its cocoon, from within. The solemn mystery of the divinity within challenges us constantly, especially when any tendency to animalism makes itself felt. The dignity of man consists in the fact that he is capable of unfolding for himself the innate capacities which are involved in his being, and that his progress through the slow education of life until the consummation, when, in fulness of perfected manhood, God will rest in us and we in God, consists in the steady, gradual conquest of the lower life by the constant affirmation of the "Divinity that stirs within us."

The Spirit of God says to each one, "Strive consciously to recognize the 'Power that worketh in you' ; overcome the mere nature-life of your complex self ; 'Arise and go to the Father' within you. In the strength of your divine heredity ignore and despise the suggestions of the carnal nature, which are, after all, only the soil in which the divine germ is planted. You

are in potentiality what Jesus was in full-orbed perfection."

Now it is perfectly clear that this glorious revealed truth of Divine Immanence, and essential inseverability from God, and full identification with Jesus, is destructive of the conventional idea of "substitution," namely, that the Lord Jesus gave Himself to a cruel and ignominious death instead of us that He might pay down to an Omnipotent World-Ruler an infinitely costly ransom to save the whole human race from damnation.

This conception, that the crucifixion was a propitiatory expiation to buy Humanity out of hell has been of great power in a certain stage of perception, and has proved a valuable working hypothesis. It has led many, under the terror of divine punishment, to cling with yearning gratitude to God's Pacifier, the Saviour of the world, and to lead new lives. To minds that are on that plane of understanding the conception is still of value, though there is no trace of it in our Lord's own words, and no hint of it in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, which is the immortal self-painted portrait of Almighty God. But it seems to me that the prominent thought for Holy Week should be this: The Lord "turns and looks upon" me. He says, "Be-

hold and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow." And St Paul interprets the saying for me. St Paul says that we are to " behold and see," that " by beholding we may be transformed into the same image." Realized identification with the Divine victim is the object of the " beholding and seeing "; not accepting a sacrifice, but sharing an experience ; not intellectually assenting to an historic fact, but evolving a similar character. Jesus suffered for us but not instead of us, He illustrated in His own Person the method of the Immanence of God in human life-centres. He taught us that suffering is an inseparable attribute of human life. He exhibits a consummate act of sacrifice for principle, and He turns and looks upon us to ask us how far we have reproduced in ourselves the same perfectly yielded will, the same readiness to " endure the Cross, despising the shame," the same at-one-ment of the human and the Divine ; and when by " beholding we have become transformed " He promises us the same triumphant parting committal, " Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit," and the same resurrection and ascension.

I can only say for myself that when the Lord thus " turns and looks upon me," when He says,

"I have been tried in all points like as you are that I might be able to help my brethren who are tried," and when I "remember" how often I have flinched from my discipline, and moaned over my Gethsemane, and shrunk from my Calvary, my soul goes out, like Peter, and "weeps bitterly."

There is in this thought of identification with the Christ an overmastering incentive to face bravely, courageously the education of life ; to resolve earnestly not to mar, to misuse, to pervert, to waste our school time. We know that we too "came out from the Father and came into the world," we know when events seem against us, that the puzzle of this material world is moving on, with one central impulse, to a pre-determined end, and, knowing that God's purpose is in our lives, God's loving care in our sorrows, we can surely learn to be patient, for our Father's processes are gradual, and the mills of God grind slowly. How utterly inconsistent with this splendid thought of identification with the Perfect Elder Brother is a desponding, pessimistic life. We are at School, as was Jesus, we must have our wills crossed, our playtime curtailed, the desire of our eyes taken from us, but how much there is in our school for which we can heartily thank God. The beauties of

nature ; the ceaseless pleasures of science, art, literature, music ; the soul-transforming experience of a great love ; the happiness of true friendships ; the unfailing satisfaction of being able to contribute to the well-being and comfort of others, what joy they bring ! When you know whence you came and whither wending, you will recognize the utter disloyalty of grumbling and despondency. You will only wonder at the goodness of the All-Father in making school so happy. And when school-time is over, when we go home to the Father for the long holiday (we dim-eyed people call it dying), when we meet the loved ones who have gone home before us, and who are waiting for us ; when spiritual consciousness is fully awakened, our thankfulness to Infinite Father-Mind will not be a perfunctory duty, as it often is here, but the outpouring of our whole being in an endless Alleluia.

I ask myself, Am I growing ? am I learning more readily to think myself into conscious oneness with the source and substance of my being ? What is the principle of growth ? It is all around us in nature at this season of the year. Nature is our Lord's own analogy, we cannot wear it out. Hold up a grain of wheat to the sunshine, it is, in a sense, in its heaven ; the air,

the light are all around it, what more can it want? It is not in possession of its inheritance; it does not, so to speak, know itself yet. Make it "subject to vanity, not willingly"; send it to school in the soil; bury it; it has fallen from its paradise of air and light; the earth presses on it, the moisture disintegrates and destroys it, and nothing remains but the minute germ which, by its indwelling vital force, removes what, in proportion to its size, are mountains, and it pushes up two tiny seed-leaves, cotyledons, like hands in prayer, till at last it strikes roots downwards, and raises a stem upwards, and overcomes resistance, till it grows to "the measure of the stature of the fulness" of the parent plant. Then it inherits both earth and Heaven, and at-ones them.

If we realize the priceless dignity of the life within us, which is one with Infinite Life, the germ, the Mystic Christ within us will gradually remove all the mountains that hold us down. The mystic Christ within you stands against the temporal, the physical, the sensual, the transitory. As He grows within you He cleanses the sub-conscious mind in which your past is stored. He will bring to your conscious memory things that you have forgotten, He

will "turn and look" and you will "remember," and then, as Tennyson says:—

"Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart and gather in the eyes."

But fear not, those tears are the result of the cleansing process, they are evidence of the growth of the Christ within you.

Believe that you have this Potency within you. Claim it, call upon it, use it, invite it to "turn the past to pain." Ultimate victory will not be imitation but evolution, not imitation of the Historic Christ, but evolution of the Mystic Christ, "Christ in you the hope of glory." Conformity to the image of the Historic Christ, to which you are predestined, will be the result of this "Christ in you" thinking through you, sometimes causing you to weep bitterly, but gradually externalizing in your life.

I suggest, then, that we should follow in thought the words and actions of the Historic Christ from day to day during this Holy Week with the exclusive idea of "Identification" in our minds. Do not imagine that He is doing all this, and bearing all this, instead of you, that God may be able to forgive you, but realize that His every word, His every action, has a mystic and inclusive significance. He is exhibiting in

His own Person what the Mystic Christ, the universal Principle of Humanity, can make and will make of you if you will co-operate with it. Recognize yourself in Him ; test your progress in overcoming the world by Him ; remember that the hidden Potency which led Him to victory is within you. Then forget self. Think of others. Make others happy.

“ Live for those who love you,
For those who think you true,
For the Heaven that is above you,
For the Crown you have in view,
For the Cause that needs assistance,
For the Wrongs that need resistance,
For the Future in the distance,
For the Good that you can do.”

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